



The Marker Lamp

Volume 69 • Number 1 • July 2023

Starting a Layout at the Age of 80

...plus:

- ***Remembering Loren Neufeld***
- ***Live Steam Railroading, Part 2***
- ***The Lucky Lucy Mine Blacksmith Shop***
- ***Animating a Steam Donkey***
- ***The Smithville, Texas & Indian Territory***



The Marker Lamp

The Official Publication of
The Lone Star Region of the
National Model Railroad
Association

**Volume 69, Number 1
July 2023**

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The editorial policy of The Marker Lamp, the official publication of The Lone Star Region, shall be to contribute, wherever possible, to the promotion, growth and understanding of the hobby of Model Railroading, within the confines of good taste and responsibility. The Marker Lamp is published once each quarter by and for the members of The Lone Star Region of The National Model Railroad Association. Articles appearing in The Marker Lamp are the opinions of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position or policies of the officers or membership of The Lone Star Region or The National Model Railroad Association.

Address all correspondence, news, photos and drawings to the editor. All material will be gladly accepted and will be used depending on the availability of space and suitability of material. None will be returned unless a stamped, self-addressed envelope is provided. Correspondence relating to Pike Ads and Dealer Ads should be addressed to Speed Muller lsrtreasurer@huntatrophymra.org

Cover photos are of Dean Ferris'
N Scale Oregon Join Line
(photos by Dean)
See it at the 2023 Texas Express!

Submission Deadlines & Advertising Closing Dates

Spring IssueFebruary 15
Summer IssueMay 15
Fall IssueAugust 15
Winter IssueNovember 15

Internet Post Date:

Approx. 30 Days After Deadline.
Materials received after the deadline
will be held for the next issue.

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President's Message



by Donna Orr
donnalorrtx@gmail.com

Working Towards the National Convention

Since we are trying to get the schedule current on the Marker Lamps, so that they will coincide with the actual quarters of our fiscal year, this will be a short message from your President.

Our Main event this year is not our regional convention, but our National convention. And to let everyone know, this 2023 convention committee is working long hours very effectively to get this accomplished. The people on the committee are from Divisions 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6 and from outside of the Region. We have had many hurdles to overcome, but they are working out.

Because of all the talk I would like to explain here about the banquet, so everyone knows what is really going on. The banquet cost was \$135. Most feel that this is quite a high price for a banquet. And this price was being subsidized by the convention. The actual price for the per person plate was \$144 (this includes a mandatory 25% gratuity). And the cost of the speaker was not even put into this cost. So many may be upset about the cost, but it was bare minimum unless the convention takes on all cost and loses money.

So, the convention committee worked another idea with the Gaylord. We will have what they call the "small plate"

venue. There are several good meat dishes on this venue, but it is what it is, "small plate". With this each person will get hors d'oeuvres, the small plate meal and a dessert. Drinks will be coffee, tea, water. There will be an open cash bar. This cost to each person will be \$50. But keep this in mind: That is not the real cost. The convention is also subsidizing this, so that more people can attend the final event of the 2023 convention. We will be limiting the number to 400. There will still be a short program with our speaker, Spencer Christian. And of course, our National President will have a few words to say, along with your LSR President.

When the convention was originally set up to be brought here, the LSR Board of Directors agreed not to have a Regional Convention in the same year. But the LSR was promised some gain in return. We are trying to accomplish this.

If you have questions about this convention or anything pertaining to it, please email or call me. I would appreciate that in place of rumors that are not correct floating around.

Since the LSR is not having a convention this year, we will be hosting a general membership meeting at the National convention on Tuesday, August 22, 2023 in San Saba 3, from 4pm – 6pm. **ML**



From the Editor



by Peter Kazmir
peter@centexnmra.org

Better Late than Never

In this issue, you'll find an amazing article by Steve Gratke entitled, "Starting a Layout at the Age of 80....That's Crazy!" Actually, I don't think it's that crazy at all.

I've loved trains and have been a model railroader all my life. I remember when I was around seven or eight, sitting in a long-gone hobby shop in Baton Rouge figuring out what the momentum switch did on the MRC throttle on their little test loop. The funny thing is - aside from a simple N scale loop with a single siding when I was that age - I've never built a model railroad of my own.

Scandal! Don't get me wrong - I've done plenty model railroading. I've built structures, laid track and scenery on modules for our club, and operated on layouts all over the country. I've been Division Director and led a Regional Convention. Heck, I've even driven a real MoPac GP-38! But I've just somehow never gotten around to building a layout of my own.

Plenty of excuses, of course -- too busy, new baby, work is nuts, not enough room, you name it. However, I think one of the big reasons is that I want a layout as amazing as the ones I operate on regularly, like Jack Merkel's, Tommy Holt's, David Barrow's, and David Nicastro's....and I'm completely overwhelmed at the prospect. (Perhaps that's partially from my ADHD, because when I have too many things to do I tend to not do any of them. You might have noticed this issue is a... bit...late. Ahem. Sorry about that.)

Anyhow, I found Steve's article incredibly inspiring. It's never too late to get started, and there's no shame in starting at the beginning (we all do). The important thing is that we're enjoying ourselves.

And, just maybe, when I move to my new home in a year or two, there will finally be a train room.

I hope to see all of you at the **2023 Texas Express** NMRA National Convention that will be held in August in Grapevine. This is literally a once-in-a-lifetime event, having a national convention in our Region. Take advantage! This isn't just another LSR Convention: So many clinics, tours we've never had in the DFW area before, an amazing resort location, and more - not to mention admission to the National Train Show. As I write this there are almost 900 registrants, but you still have time to get reduced hotel rates!

Finally, I want to renew my plea for content. I'm happy to put the ML together and publish it, but I can't write all the articles or publish just my personal collection of photos.

Don't worry if what you have isn't written in the best prose, or is just a set of photos, or is a recording of a clinic you've done in the past - I can help you get it into shape. If you found it interesting I'll bet you my salary as publisher that someone else will too.

The next issue's deadline is September 15 and I plan for it to be focused on the Convention. Until then, keep the fun in Model Railroading! **ML**

SUPERCHARGED - HIGH SPEED



TEXAS EXPRESS

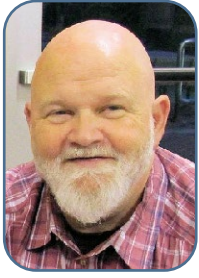
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Up the Tracks Events Calendar



by Bill Dryden
LSR Events Chair

Here are upcoming events within the LSR of which I am aware. I will provide all the information YOU send me or I can glean from other publications, websites, etc., for these events. Additional information may be available through the *NMRA Magazine* and/or various trade magazines or various websites. Also, note that all show times and dates are at the discretion of the sponsoring organization and are subject to change. Please forward any and all information about upcoming events or activities in your area, club, etc., to me, via e-mail at bdr149@airmail.net.

2023 Texas Express

NMRA Convention

August 19 – 27, 2023

Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center
Grapevine, Texas

www.2023texasexpress.com

Come all!

PARTICIPATE!!!

RECURRING EVENTS AND MEETINGS

LSR Division 1 – Cowcatcher Division – Fort Worth

The Cowcatcher Division meets on the 2nd Saturday of each month at the Texas Western Model Railroad Club, 6808 Forest Hills Drive, Forest Hills, TX. For more information regarding the Cowcatcher Division or its programs, check their website: <https://www.cowcatcherdivision.org>.

LSR Division 3 - Trinity River Division – Allen

The Trinity River Division meets at 10:00 am on the 3rd Saturday of every month at the Christ Servant Lutheran Church, Allen Texas. Occasionally things change due to scheduling conflicts so pay close attention to the email meeting notices that go out a week before the meeting. If you would like to be added to the email list contact Robert Secrest at Robert.Secrest@hotmail.com.

LSR Division 4 – Cen-Tex Division – Austin

The Cen-Tex Division meets bi-monthly at the Austin Northwest Recreational Center, 2913 Northland Drive, Austin, TX. Meetings are held at 10:00 am on the 2nd Saturday of the *odd* months and include clinics, show-and-tell, DCC minute, social activities and a layout open house. For more information about upcoming meetings, see <https://centexnmra.org> or contact director@centexnmra.org to be added to the mail list.

LSR Division 5 - Texas Panhandle & West Division

Division 5 holds their meetings virtually on Zoom on the 3rd Monday of each month starting at 7:00 pm. Anyone that can join via Zoom is welcome to attend. Use this link to sign up for the division's monthly bulletin and keep up with events and happenings in the division: <http://eepurl.com/hRLLm9> or email Headroadie2004@gmail.com.

LSR Division 6 – South Texas Division – San Antonio

The South Texas Division hosts meetings on the 2nd Saturday of *even* months at 11:00 am at the Longhorn Cafe at 12311 Nacogdoches Road in San Antonio. Please come out and join us for clinics, show-and-tell, tip and tricks, and the ever-popular Deal-or-Duds, along with great fellowship. For more information contact Don Winn at donswinn@gmail.com

LSR Division 8 - Texas Gulf Division – Houston

Division 8, the Texas Gulf Division, meets the 2nd Saturday every *odd* month from 10:00 am to 12 Noon at the Tracey Gee Community Center, 3599 Westcenter Drive, Houston, TX 77042. For more information contact Phil Stewart at pstewart1225@yahoo.com.

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Alamo Model Railroad Engineers - San Antonio

The Alamo Model Railroad Engineers meets the 2nd Friday of the month at 7:30 pm in the Zucht Building at the Texas Transportation Museum, 11791 Wetmore Rd., San Antonio TX. For more information call Peter Shavney (210) 317-3661 or Gene Turner (210) 355-2777; or visit the web site www.alamomodelrailroadengineers.com.

Austin Model Railway Society - Austin

The Austin Model Railway Society is a HO scale modular group that is open to new members and meets once a month. For more information please email Steve Jackobs at president@austinrailway.org or visit the web site www.austinrailway.org.

Houston Area "G" Gaugers - Rosenberg

On the 4th Sunday of each month, the Houston Area "G" Gaugers (HAGG) model train club meets at the Rosenberg Railroad Museum to run their special trains on the tracks of the Garden Railroad Exhibit. The museum also hosts fun seasonal activities for the kids on this day. Steam engines, circus trains, patriotic trains or everyone's favorite Thomas? You never know what trains you'll see. Rosenberg Railroad Museum, 1921 Avenue F, Rosenberg, TX. More information: info@RosenbergRRMuseum.org.

Houston Area Live Steamers

HALS has over 9,000 feet of track for you to enjoy and ride on most any Saturday of the year. Someone is usually there every Saturday with special run, operations, waybills/timetable, work and fun run days scheduled throughout the year. Our public run days are the 3rd Saturday of the month March through November. Come see our 2,500 foot expansion in Phase 4. Model Railroaders (any scale) are welcome to attend most any time. Check our web site out at www.hals.org for schedule of events or e-mail Rick White at rick.white.jr@gmail.com for more information.

New Braunfels Railroad Museum

Kids Fun Day is held on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm at the New Braunfels Railroad Museum, 302 South San Antonio Street (in the 1907 Restored Railroad Depot), New Braunfels, TX. Museum phone (830) 627-2447. Kids of all ages will have the opportunity to run model trains and become a Jr. Engineer. Also among the displays at the Kids Fun Day will be a large US Army Model Garden (G) Scale and Lego Trains. Visit our Steam Engine, Caboose, Dining Car (available for Birthday Parties) and Box Car. There will be other fun, train related activities, additional model trains, train artifacts, our 1907 depot are on display. The Railroad Museum opens at 10:00 am on Saturdays. For field trip scheduling and more information, call Susan Riordon (210) 542-6121, or visit us at www.nbrrm.org.

North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs – Irving

The North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs (NTC) meets the 3rd Tuesday of the month. Visit the website www.dfwtrainshows.com for more information about the NTC, its meeting site, member clubs or sponsored events.

San Antonio Model Railroad Association - San Antonio

The San Antonio Model Railroad Association, SAMRA, is open to new members and meets on the 2nd Friday of each month at 7:30 pm in the Bob Clarke Rail Heritage Museum, 7702 Narrow Pass, Live Oak, TX. Please visit our website www.samratx.org for information about our activities and their dates and times. Also, like us on Facebook.

South Texas Railroad Socials – San Antonio

The “Socials” are a casual gathering of train folks in South Texas, both modelers and prototype railfans. We gather quarterly for a couple hours of Clinics and Presentations, Show-n-Tell, regional news, Q&A and funny video clips. Not a meeting, not a club, just buy lunch at the restaurant and use their party room. Started in 2018, went virtual via Zoom in 2020, going hybrid in 2021 (back to in-person and virtual). Plus, we have Shop Talk, a quarterly ‘project guys’ round table gathering, in between the Socials. Read more, see photos from past Socials and find our next date, at www.SouthTexasRR.com.

Texas Northern Model Railroad Club – Dallas (North)

The Texas Northern Model Railroad Club business meeting is the 1st Thursday of the month and has regular meetings on Thursday evenings and most Saturdays. If you like to operate, come by on Tuesday nights to join our weekly operation session. Located in North Dallas at 11999 Plano Road., Suite 154, Dallas, TX 75243. For more information: www.texasnorthern.org.

Texas Western Model Railroad Club – Forest Hills

The Texas Western Model Railroad Club meets for its business meeting every 1st Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm. The Club is located at 6808 Forest Hills Drive, Forest Hills, TX. For more information: (682) 587-2092 or www.twmrc.org or email cdo@twmrc.org.

EVENTS AND SHOWS

September

2nd – 3rd (Weatherford) **Clark Gardens Model Train Show**. Sat. 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Sun. 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Adults \$10, Seniors \$8, Children 4 to 12 \$5, Children 3 and under Free. Clark Gardens, 567 Maddux Road, Weatherford, TX. More information: info@clarkgardens.org or <https://www.clarkgardens.org/happenings/model-train-show.html>.

16th – 17th (Temple) **41st Annual Temple Model Train Show**. Sat. 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Sun. 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Adults \$10, Children 12 and under Free with adult, Seniors and Military with I.D. receive \$1.00 discount. Frank W. Mayborn Civic & Convention Center, 3303 N. 3rd St. Temple, TX. More information: <http://centramodrr.com/train-show>.

30th – Oct 1st (Dallas/Plano) **Fall Plano Train Show** (Sponsored by the North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs). Sat. 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Sun. 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Adults \$10, Children 12 and under Free (w/ Adult Admission). Plano Civic Centre, 2000 E Spring Creek Parkway, Plano, TX. More information: <https://www.dfwtrainshows.com/>

October

21st – 22nd (New Braunfels) **New Braunfels Fall Train Show**. Fri. 10:00 am – 5:00 pm, Sat. 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Adults (14 & Older) \$10, Children (5-13) \$2. New Braunfels Civic Center, 375 South Castell Avenue, New Braunfels, Texas 78130. More information: David Lerch at urangdal@aol.com or <http://newbraunfelsrailroadmuseum.org/nbrr/train-shows/>.

27th – 29th (Fort Worth) **Southwest O Scale Meet**. Fri. 4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m., Sat. 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Sun. 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Adults \$20. Fort Worth Academy Gym, 7301 Dutch Branch Road, Fort Worth, TX. More information: Michael Ross at swoscalemeet@gmail.com. or <http://www.oscalesw.com/>.

November

21st – 25th (Lubbock) **Thanksgiving Show at the American Windmill Museum** (Sponsored by the American Windmill Museum and the Lubbock Model Railroad Association). Tue, November 21, 10:00 a.m. – Sat, November 25, 5:00 p.m. (Closed November 23 for Thanksgiving Day). American Windmill Museum, 1701 Canyon Lake Dr, Lubbock, TX. More information: <https://lmra806.wordpress.com/> or <https://windmill.com/>.

EXCURSION TRAIN TRIPS

Austin Steam Train; Cedar Park, TX; (512) 477-8468; www.austinsteamtrain.org

Grapevine Vintage Railroad; Grapevine, TX; (817) 410-3185; www.gvrr.com

Old Hickory Railroad; Jackson, LA; (225) 634-7397; www.louisianasteamtrain.com

Texas State Railroad; Palestine & Rusk, TX; (888) 987-2461; www.texasstaterr.com

Please consider our deadlines for submittals and publications to allow adequate lead time to correctly announce your event – upcoming column submission deadlines are the 15th of June, August and November. Publication of the *Marker Lamp* is the following month. **ML**



Loren Neufeld, MMR



I received a call from Judith that my friend Loren Neufeld had passed way on Saturday April 29th. While the call was not unexpected since Loren was in Hospice care since his return home from the hospital, it is the one that another friend has passed on.

Looking back, I met Loren when we moved back to Texas from North Carolina in 1999.

We headed to the yearly Lone Star Region convention and I wanted to enter a couple of models into the contest since I was working toward my Master Model Railroader. As I was working on my paperwork to enter the models, I met Loren who was the Contest Chairman at the convention. He invited me to spend sometime in the contest room and help out if I could. As we visited talking about models and different techniques, we both knew a friendship was growing. Since he already had his MMR, Loren became one of the persons I would contact with questions as I worked on my MMR.

Each year at the LSR Convention more and more time was spent in the contest room helping Loren with what ever task he needed assistance in along with learning how to judge the models. It was at one of these conventions that Loren asked me if I would consider taking over as Contest Chair since he was wanting to get back into building and entering models into the contest not in N Scale but in large scale. I told him I would be willing to take over the contest room if he would give me help me through the next convention. He not only helped me with the next convention but he was with me at every convention giving a hand where needed. This went on for many years and Loren and I eventually served together as Contest Co-Chairs.

In 2009 I told Loren that I was going to tear down my layout and that we were looking to move from College Station to the Navasota area, a little closer to my son and my modeling friends. When we found our home, it had no train room so the building of a train room became a priority since at the Narrow Gauge Convention Craig Brantley, Eddie Carroll and myself put in a bid to host the 2015 National Narrow Gauge Convention

in Houston. Loren called offering help in planning the layout and building of the layout. After many phone calls and meeting together, the final plan was selected and plans were finalized to make a two-level layout with O Standard gauge on the lower level and On3 logging on the upper level.

Looking at a large unfinished room my big question to Loren was will it fit and where do we put the supports for the upper level that would be attached to the studs. Loren showed up the following Saturday with black markers and together we worked from his plans drawing the layout of the benchwork on the floor. It fit on paper and also in the room, when we got to the other side of the room, we were within $\frac{3}{4}$ " from Loren's plan. At this point Loren said you are going to need help in getting a layout ready for the convention and asked if he could help build it. Off course I said yes. Over the next 4 years Loren would show up one or two Saturdays a month helping me to get first all the benchwork completed and then the trackwork put in place. With four months until the November Layouts Tours in Houston that first year he said let's be open and have trains running. It was a tough challenge but and we did get trains running on the upper level and we also managed to get a little scenery in.

For the four years working up to the Narrow Gauge Convention those Saturday work sessions became something I looked forward to not only for the help with all the plaster work but for the conversations over lunch at the local Mexican Restaurant. It was over one of those lunch's





that Loren brought up the idea that he and Jim Lemmond were thinking about building a portable layout in On30 to take to the Narrow Gauge Convention in Houston. I told him it was a great idea and offered my help if he needed it. He also assured me he would continue helping me with my layout. At this time, I was not the only layout Loren was helping on, since he asked for my help in building buildings for Harry Daniels and Jim Lemmond.

With Loren's dedication my layout was ready for the Narrow Gauge Convention along with Jim Lemmond's. Loren and Jim also had completed the portable layout in On30 that they took to the convention and entered it in the contest where they took First Place.

After the convention the deadline to finish the layout was gone, so we became a little more relaxed on working on the railroad. The sessions were still enjoyable as we solved the world's problems while working on the railroad. We still headed in to our Mexican Restaurant for lunch where by now they had learned that Loren loved hot sauce, instead of the little bowl they bring to most folks Loren got a soup bowl of hot sauce which he usually finished.

While working on my layout Loren challenged me to get all 11 certificates needed for MMR, a challenge I accepted as long as he would do the same. We supported each other as we worked together to get those last certificates. I felt honored to be one of the judges that judged his last

certificate and of course when it was time to get my final certificate, I asked the AP chair if he would ask Loren to be there to judge mine, which he did.

I will miss out times together in the contest room where we picked each other's brain and tried different techniques in our model building. As Loren's memory started to fade and his health declined it became a little more difficult to communicate with him, but many times he remembered helping and asked how the railroad was and he would talk about those Saturday sessions.

Rest in peace my friend. -Chuck Lind

The best thing about Loren was his willing to help *anyone* with their Model Railroad. While he did not help build my West Virginia Western Railroad, he was instrumental in adding the 'tag line' to it.

Since I was born and raised in Huntington, WV (the home of the Chesapeake and Ohio RR) Loren decided I needed to add "The Shine Line." Ever since, my stationary envelopes, and my 1/8 scale "Critic" have The Shine Line below the C&O for Progress logo.

Thank you, Loren. I always think of you when I see the logo. -Peter Bryan

Starting a Layout at the Age of 80...That's Crazy!

by Steve Gratke

Photos by the Author

I have enjoyed the privilege of posting over 30 layouts to the 2023 Texas Express International NMRA Convention website over the past 16 months. These are featured layouts for bus tours and self guide visits in Divisions 1 and 3 of the Lone Star Region. That makes me familiar with how a great layout looks.

The layout of this article looks nothing like those great featured layouts. I have zero scenery and my steam locomotives and rolling stock are models from the 1960's & 70's. I started this HO layout at the age of 80 which my body tells me might be a bit late in life for layout building but that is the point of this article: it's never too late!

I am in the 3rd configuration of my layout after a year and a half of evolution and there is nothing to brag about. That year and a half probably would have taken just 3 months of a younger person's work. I feel like a "newbie" at times, but I am having FUN with my NMRA "jobs" and this layout. They are keeping me going, keeping me busy. I must admit, I had to be pushed along in those jobs and this layout. I hope this article will encourage others to keep going and stay busy!

The Dream

I started with 3-rail at 6 years of age, under the Christmas Tree. I got interested in HO in 1962 during college days. My daughters and I had a 4x8' HO layout under the Christmas tree from the mid-1970s into the early 1980s. After just lurking around, I got back into our hobby in 2017 doing upgrades to my old steam loco and heavyweight passenger car models. A Model Railroad Hobbyist Magazine editorial in 2018 lead me into research resulting in my dream layout theme, which is a proto freelance of the Fort Worth & Denver (a Burlington Subsidiary) Passenger Operations Terminal at Fort Worth in the Late 1930s. I look at my layout and dream that it matches that theme.



Figure 1: The start, in 2007, with grandson Mack running his train

Keep Busy

My wife of 56 years passed away in early 2021 after a 28-year battle with breast cancer; I was lost. My family urged me to join something and get involved. Fearing they meant a widower's group, I joined the NMRA in June 2021. By January 2022, Mike Mackey, MMR had me involved as a webmaster of two sites - I was busy. While I was getting busy in my NMRA jobs, my 3 daughters Christina, Karen, and Kathy were pushing me to start a layout. They wanted me *really* busy. I owe much to my family and Mike – they lifted me up by keeping me busy and pushing.

Starting a Layout

I had a short restart in 2007 (Figure 1) when my 6-year-old grandson Mack got interested in HO trains after a Cub Scout outing. He and I built 6 modules. I would call it "son of 4x8." We never finished the layout because he discovered t-ball and sports.

During a family group gathering in the late summer of 2021, Karen and Kathy led two of my granddaughters and

one of my sons-in-law to retrieve those 6 modules from their resting place of 15 years in the attic. They bolted them together and asked me what I was going to do next. Oh, me!

Modular Oval Test Track

Since those 2007 modules made an oval, I reasoned that they would be perfect just to test my locos and cars as I upgraded or repaired them. The corner and 4 foot straight modules are one foot wide and 6 inches high. The modules are bolted together using hand-tightened eye bolts and wing nuts. The legs at module ends are joined by shim plates to set height and are locked in place with screws. The layout can be easily taken apart and moved.

I painted the modules gray with white legs to give the bare wood a "finished look." The layout is not much with no scenery. My family helped me remove furniture from the home office to make it a train room. I asked, "What if the office isn't big enough?" Daughter Christina replied, "Cut a hole in the wall and run your trains into the den." I have never forgotten that answer. She may have joked, but I considered it permission -- the kids will just have to patch the wall. Trains were running in October 2021 even though it was just round



Figure 2: The oval test track is ready

and round. I probably violated every rule of layout building.

Convention and Operations

Mike encouraged me to attend my first convention, the May 2022 LSR Convention in Temple, Texas. He arranged with Jack Merkel, MMR to put me through an operations session on the Austin Model Railway Society's modular layout at the convention. I started as the engineer and Jack was the conductor. Then we switched jobs. Thank goodness Jack is a very patient teacher. It was all freight, but Jack and his switch list opened my eyes to what operations were all about. It was great fun and exciting. Afterwards, I walked back to Mike smiling. I began to think about switching my heavyweight cars.

Mike continued mentoring me and invited me with daughters Christina and Kathy to do operations on his Texas & St. Louis layout. Mike sent me the 2014 Passenger Operations Clinic by Steve Gillett of Tulsa, Oklahoma to help me get a better understanding of passenger operations. Steve is going to present a passenger operations clinic at the 2023 Texas Express in August 2023. I hope to attend that clinic and meet him. Mike is quietly pushing me along.

Coach Yard and Reversing

I realized the oval would not keep me busy, so I started building and expanding into a bigger closed loop (Figure 3). I needed a coach



Figure 3: The coach yard and reversing has been added

yard to do car switching and I needed more than round and round.

By the beginning of summer 2022, the layout had 12 modules - 5 of the original 6, plus 7 new ones taking up a space of about 9' X 10'. There were now 15 turnouts and 2 crossings. The turnouts were all manual and rail was code 100. It was still not much to look at; I still used that gray and white paint – my “finished look.”

There is a reverse wye built into the right side of the coach yard and a reverse loop connected to the right side of the coach yard. I could now make up a consist and break down a consist and reverse my passenger trains. I made a big mistake though on the coach yard entry due to the small space I had. I used 18 inch radius whereas the rest of the layout used 20, 22, and 24 inch radii. Some locos and some heavyweights did not like that 18 inches.

Now DCC

I moved to DCC shortly after I got trains running on the oval test track with a Power Cab. I later added a second throttle. Four of my 1960-70s steam locos have sound decoders and I will eventually add decoders to more. I have several DC steam locos, so I still need the power pack.

Out of curiosity, I installed a WFD-30 CAB Bus Interface that provides WiFi control of trains using my old iPhone running WiThrottle with no JMRI – it works great and is really cool as a third throttle.

Thinking Bigger

That version of the layout had taken some steps, but it still lacked a steam loco service area and mail/express services. I had to think bigger while still thinking about that hole in the wall to the den. I decided to make the layout go all the way around the room to include:

- Passenger depot - I won a resin office building kit at that LSR convention. I hope to use that kit to make a building flat for the depot.
- US Mail and Railway Express Agency services - Mike gave me a cast plaster building flat that will be the REA. Another wall from the resin kit will be the US Mail building flat.
- Coach yard and services - I need to improve track spacing and entry.
- Steam locomotive services - Roundhouse and service models are ready. Turntable needs to be installed. The module needs to be built.

So, in October 2022 I started a big change with no plan on paper as usual. As you can see, I removed everything toward the camera from the double crossover on the right and the partial French door view on the left. This would allow the layout to grow from

almost 9' X 10' to almost 10' X 17'.

Since all the furniture was removed in the office except for my table desk and shelves, I was left with three obstacles that I had avoided in the earlier versions of the layouts but I found solutions:

- French door entry - Remove doors and add a lift bridge
- Closet with bi-fold doors - Angle layout at a corner to open one door fully and the other partially
- Table desk and shelves - Build layout above desk and through/on shelves

After 5 months, on March 5, 2023, I began running trains around the whole room, but construction continued. It was still round and round, but I had a plan in my head. The following photos show the appearance of the layout now and describe my plans. The new, around the room layout is a single main. So, all round a round is on the same track but there are passing sidings. Yes, I have run 3 trains at once – it was hectic!

The first thing you see as you walk toward the train room is no French doors and a lift bridge in the open position as seen in Figure 4. You also get a glimpse of my control panel



Figure 4: First sight of the train room



Figure 5: North end of the layout with depot tracks and locomotive service area mockup

attached to the coach yard module.

The north end of the room (Figure 5) is where the passenger depot and US Mail & Railway Express wall flat buildings will be. There is a photo printed depot there now. I have passenger canopy platforms also. Mike gave me 3D prints of luggage, baggage, and carts for those platforms but I need to get a daughter or granddaughter to paint.

The depot is 3 through tracks, for now. The left side of Figure 5 is the northwest corner of the room. The dominating feature in the northwest corner is the mock-up of the locomotive service area. The white surface is a drawing of the

area including the turntable and roundhouse footprints. At the bottom left of Figure 5 is a RH turnout at the end of the lift bridge that leads to a diagonal track that lines up with the pivot point of the turntable. This is a mock-up of the entry track.

The roundhouse is a Korber Models 5 stall I bought in 1996. The boxed kit sat in a cabinet untouched for 25 years. In the fall of 2022, my daughter Karen and I put it together. Karen did all the painting and weathering. We left the doors off for now while we make hinges. A Walthers Turntable is ready to be installed. The fuel oil tank, water tank, and sand station are complete and will most likely be located along that diagonal lead-in track to the turntable. The track starting with the turnout laying on the lift bridge and into the service

yard is mock-up and not attached.

The west side of the room (Figure 6), shows the closed lift bridge across the former French doorway. A standard interior house door hinge is at the left end. The bridge is aligned with Hafele table pins at the right end. Rail is soldered to PC boards at track interfaces at each end of the bridge. The right end may soon have a turnout installed on the bridge to access the locomotive service area as shown in Figure 5. It will use those PC boards too.

The south end of the room (Figure 7), shows a single



Figure 6: West side with lift bridge in the doorway



Figure 7: South side from shelf to over desk with operational coach yard

track on a board bridge passing over the desk after exiting from the shelf with a track board attached to the shelf. This is the same single main that crossed the lift bridge. That single main board bridge then joins the module tracks of the east side.

A LH turnout on the desk board bridge is the entry to the coach yard. The coach yard module retains its 6 foot length from the earlier version of the layout but the diagonal ends are now square. The coach yard wiring is complete. The coach yard is operational; however, I was unable to incorporate a reverse wye because I put priority on aisle clearance. I have a reversing wye mock-up though that makes use of shelf along that south wall.

The left end of the east side wall (Figure 8) has a double crossover that leads to the three depot tracks to the left. The double crossover exit to the right leads to the future hole in the wall to the den via the blue line. The other exit from the double crossover to the right is the passenger terminal main going to the over the desk bridge board. The two tracks at the bottom of Figure 8 are stub sidings.

On the right end of the east side wall (Figure 9), the passenger terminal main from the double crossover of Figure 8 goes through 3 turnouts creating a passing siding at the top, a main through track in the middle, and through

siding track at the bottom. The through siding leads to the two stub sidings that go all the way to the left in Figure 8. The blue line is another view of the future mainline descending a ramp to that hole in the wall to the den. This will be the mainline in and out of the passenger operations terminal in the train room. The den will be staging for returns from destinations. The track in the den is about 2.5 inches lower than track in the train room. I expect the ramp to be a little less than 2% grade.

Construction

The steam loco service area module is yet to be built. To accommodate the roundhouse, turntable, fuel oil tank, water tank, and sand station, the module will require a minimum of 27 inches by 58 inches. I need a reverse wye in this around the room configuration for an articulated train. The Burlington operated the articulated Sam Houston Zephyr 9901, a shovel nose twin of the Pioneer Zephyr

9900, with daily round trips between Houston and Dallas-Fort Worth from 1936 to 1945. Jim Packer, MMR's fantastic Nevadun layout will be on the bus tour at the August 2023 Texas Express convention. Jim is all steam except for a Pioneer Zephyr. I have one too.

Tracks in the Den

The den is several months or years away. I want the tracks in the den to consist of at least a reverse loop and at least 3 staging through sidings. This will occupy a shelf about 20 feet long including a corner about 5 feet square. For initial simplicity, there will be no switching of cars or locos, just returns to the terminal. The shelf will fit behind a sofa.

Closure

It has taken almost a year and a half to get to where I am with this layout. I work slowly and take lots of breaks ranging from an hour to a week or more - that is an old guy thing. So, it is possible to build a layout when you are over 80. I never planned or expected to get this far. The scenery for the Passenger Operations Terminal will be just oily dirt and



Figure 8: East wall left end toward the north wall

crushed rock ground cover with several buildings.

I have lots of used plastic buildings from previous kit builds, train shows, estate sales, and The Texas Western Model Railroad Club's garage sales. I plan to cut up some buildings to customize as building flats. Not only did I post those great featured layouts to the 2023 Texas Express website, but I posted close to 130 clinics to the website. Some are about scenery. Maybe one clinician will talk about the "dirt in a train yard."

Also, I have ordered HO scale 3D Prints of "Mike M" and "Gordy" from miniprints, so I will have the Western Director and the President of NMRA standing on my layout – now *that* is scenery. As it happens, Bernard Hellen of miniprints will be giving a clinic on figure painting at the 2023 Texas Express. Got to make that one.

Someday, I may write a follow-up article in a year of two titled "Trying to do Passenger Operations at Age 83, That's

Crazy." That assumes the Marker Lamp Editor is willing to publish more of this old guy's crazy stuff that is not very eye catching. [He is! -Ed] **ML**

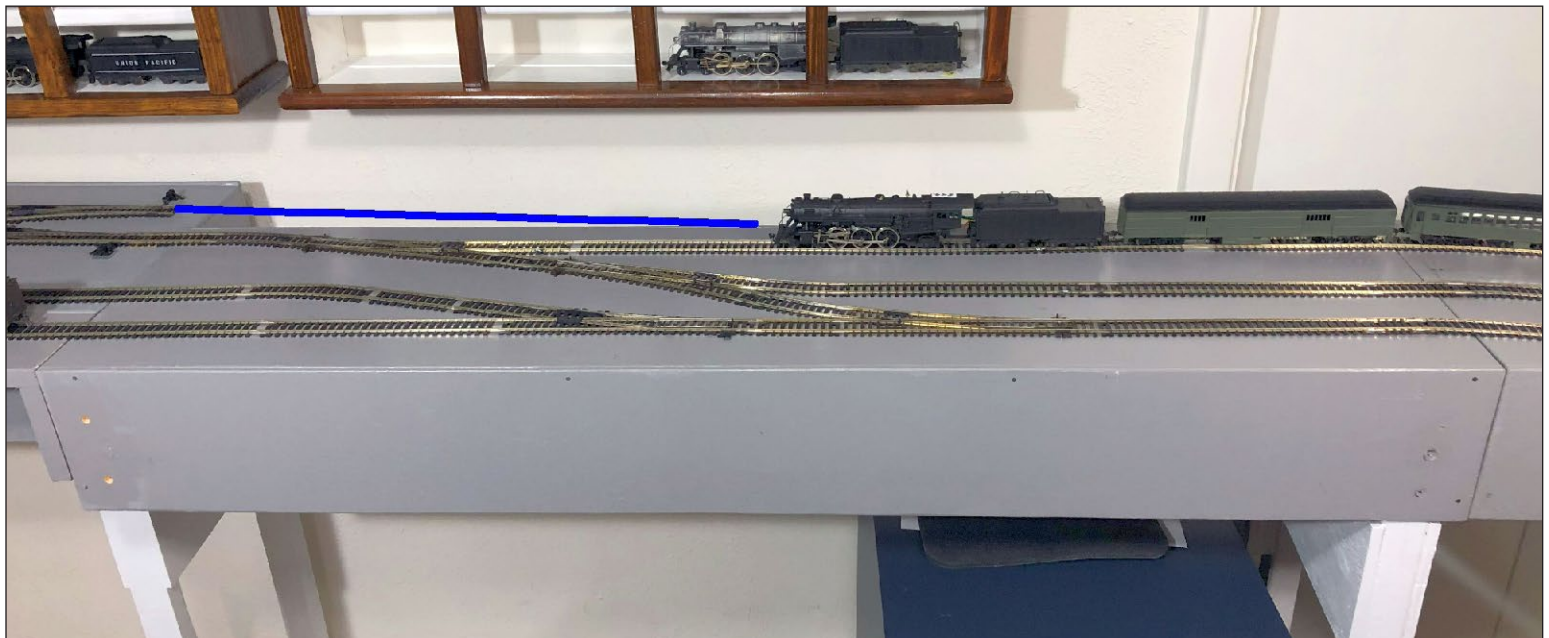


Figure 9: East wall right end with the ramp to the future hole in the wall to the den

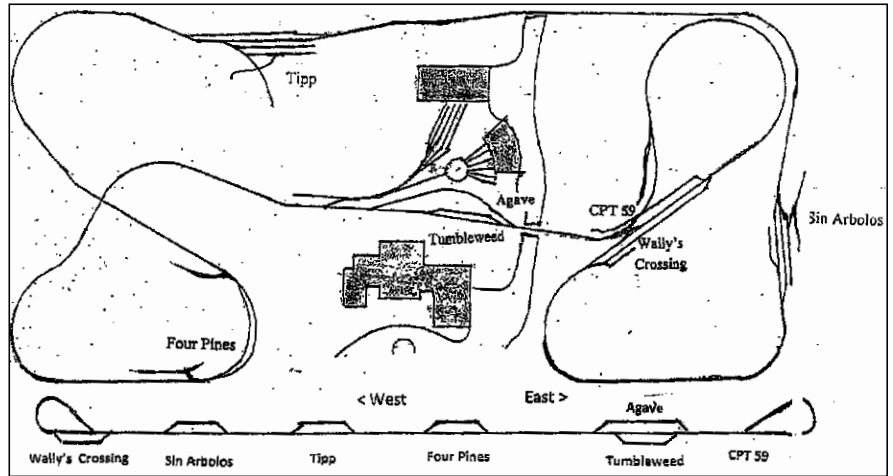
Live Steam Railroading, Part 2

by Doug Price
Photos by the Author

As promised in the last issue's article, "Does LSR really stand for Live Steam Railroading?", this article will provide a glimpse of the first two outdoor railroads hosting a spring meet for the Southwestern Live Steamers (SWLS).



We start the 2023 season out in the Midland, TX area. The Tumbleweed & Dry Gulch RR is on approximately 7.5 acres around the Bell's home. For those of you familiar with Texas geography, you know that Midland is rather flat. As such, there are very slight grades on the TW&DG RR.



TW&DG RR Track Plan



They purchased the property around 2002 and, like any dedicated railroader, the roundhouse was completed before the main house! This photo shows an overall view of the roundhouse with the steaming bays out front and the main yard area.



During the 2019 meet, five steam engines visited the railroad. This photo shows these locomotives parked on the steaming bays.

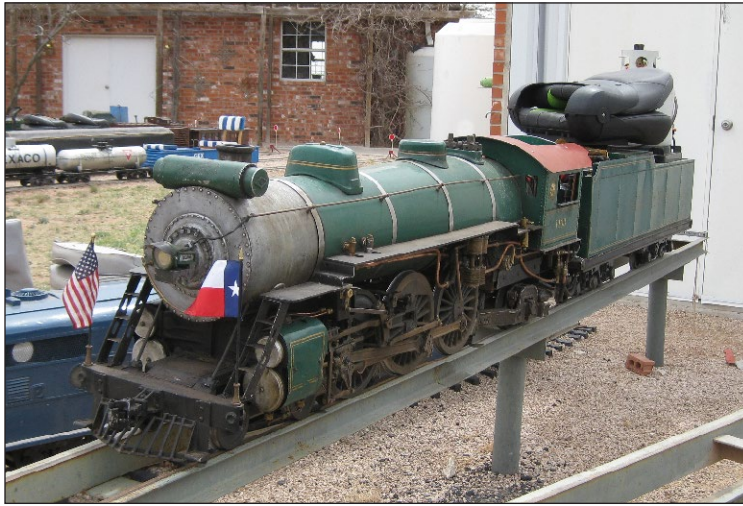


Of course, diesel engines also roam the rails in West Texas. This photo shows a collection of four diesel models during the 2020 meet.



The towns on the TW&DG have passenger service from a branch of the Texas & Pacific. This photo shows Phillip Bell's T&P passenger train

During the spring 2023 meet, four steam engines made an appearance on the TW&DG:



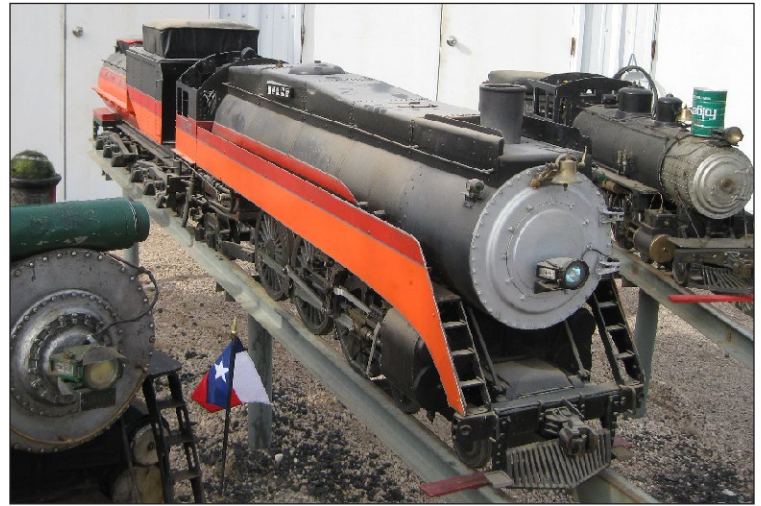
Southern 4-6-2 #1403



New York Central 2-8-2 #7113



TW&DG 4-6-0 #669



Southern Pacific 4-6-2 #2485

The TW&DG RR has four main towns along the mainline. Four Pines, Tipp, Sin Arbolos (which is Spanish for No Trees, a real town near Midland) and Wally's Crossing. Tipp and Sin Arbolos both have interesting industrial trackage creating some challenging operating sessions.

A way freight will depart from the yard with five to six freight cars. Each freight car has a car card that indicates the town and industry receiving the car. When a car is spotted in a town, the destination on the car card is marked out and the card is placed in the back of the town card box. For each car spotted, you take a car card from the front of the box to determine which cars will be picked up.



This view shows Tipp and the industrial sidings. As you can see, in many cases you must temporarily move some freight cars in order to have enough working room to spot cars at certain industries.

The photos below illustrate the complexity of Sin Arbolos. The views are taken from each end of the town. This also gives some idea of the distance required for a run-around move:



Sin Arbolos facing north

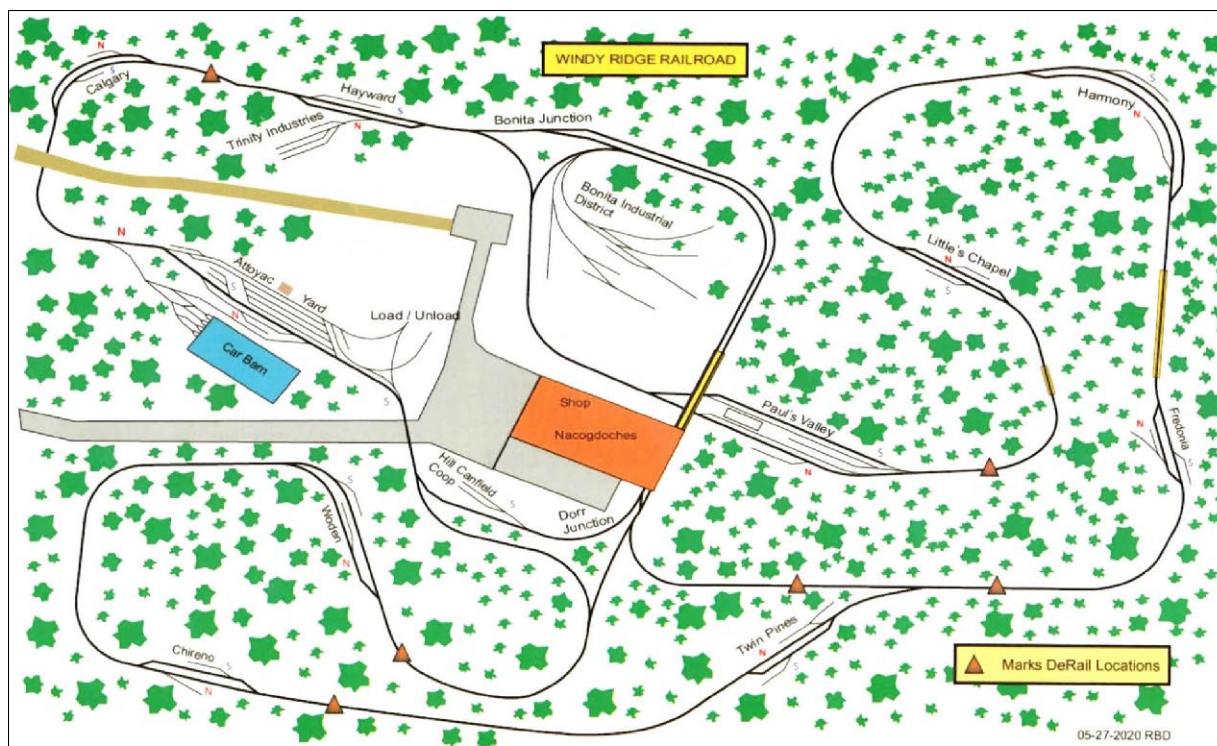


Sin Arbolos facing south



Wally Crossing has a few industrial spots, but the tracks are primarily used for mainline running. The switches are normally set so each train travels around the railroad once in each direction.

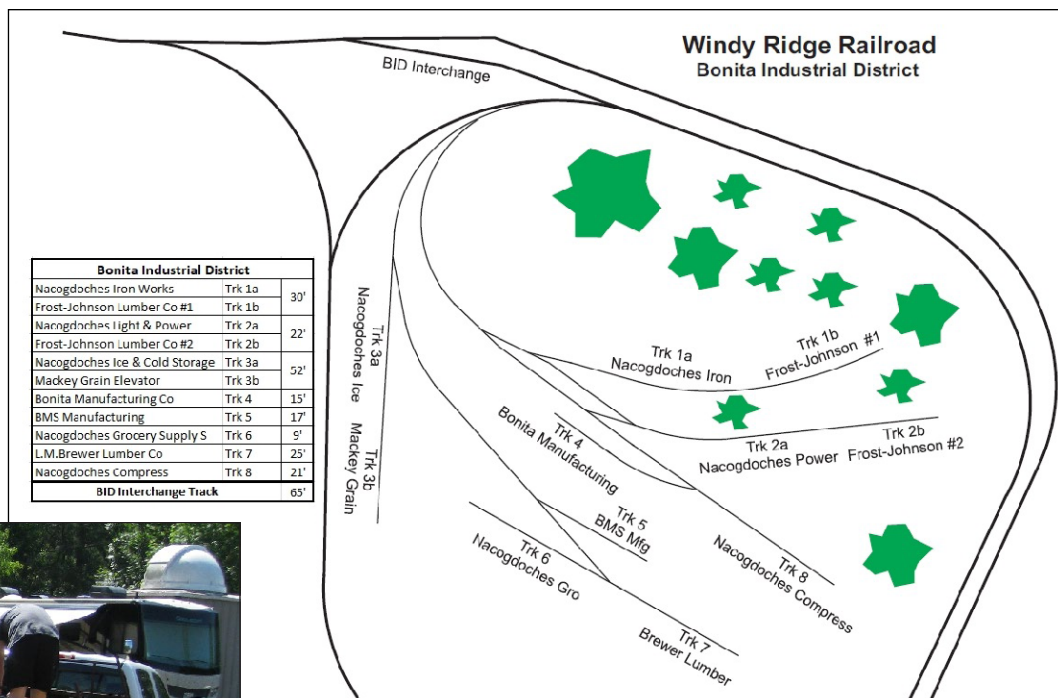
The TW&DG RR provides a lot of nice switching in a relatively compact area.



Our second stop is the Windy Ridge RR near Nacogdoches. The piney woods of east Texas provide a sharp contrast to the dry plains of the Midland area.

The Canfields purchased about 30 acres of undeveloped land. The original plan was to build a loop to run trains for the grandchildren. As you can see in the track plan, the railroad continued to expand to fill the available space!

There are ten towns for switching along the main line, not including the Bonita Industrial District. The Bonita Industrial District has an interchange track where way freights drop off and pick up cars. The Bonita crew then handles spotting the cars within the industrial district.



Bonita Industrial District Track Plan



The equipment unloading area uses a transfer lift (shown here) to unload equipment to tracks that go to Attoyac Yard, or to diesel engine bays and steam engine bays.



This photo provides an overall view of the diesel and steaming bays. With nine steam locomotives in attendance this year, a couple had to use the diesel bays.



Freight trains originate and terminate in Attoyac Yard, shown here with plenty of cars to make up trains. Note that the Yardmaster has a covered deck area to work on preparing car cards and assembling trains for the road crews.



To illustrate the contrast in scenery between east Texas and west Texas, here's an engineer's view of the mainline between Woden and Chireno.



Here, New York Central #7113 arrives in Woden while Southern Pacific #1122 waits for a green signal before departing.

The red signal, indicating that a train is approaching from the opposite direction, is visible just in from of the steam engine.



Two steam locomotives meet at Woden and exchange whistle greetings

I visited two railroads so far this spring but stay tuned for the next article covering the remainder of the railroads on the spring schedule.

Visiting one of the meets is a great way to see and learn more about this aspect of model railroading. SWLS meets are for members and invited guests. If you would like to attend an SWLS meet, please contact the Secretary/Treasurer (secretary@southwesternlivesteamers.org) and ask for an invitation. You can also learn more or obtain a membership application from the SWLS website: <https://www.southwesternlivesteamers.org>. **ML**

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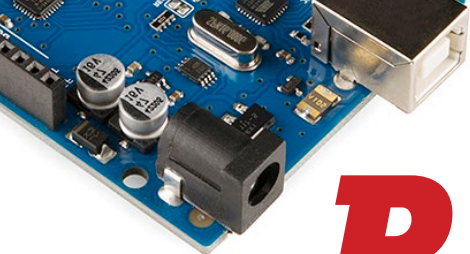
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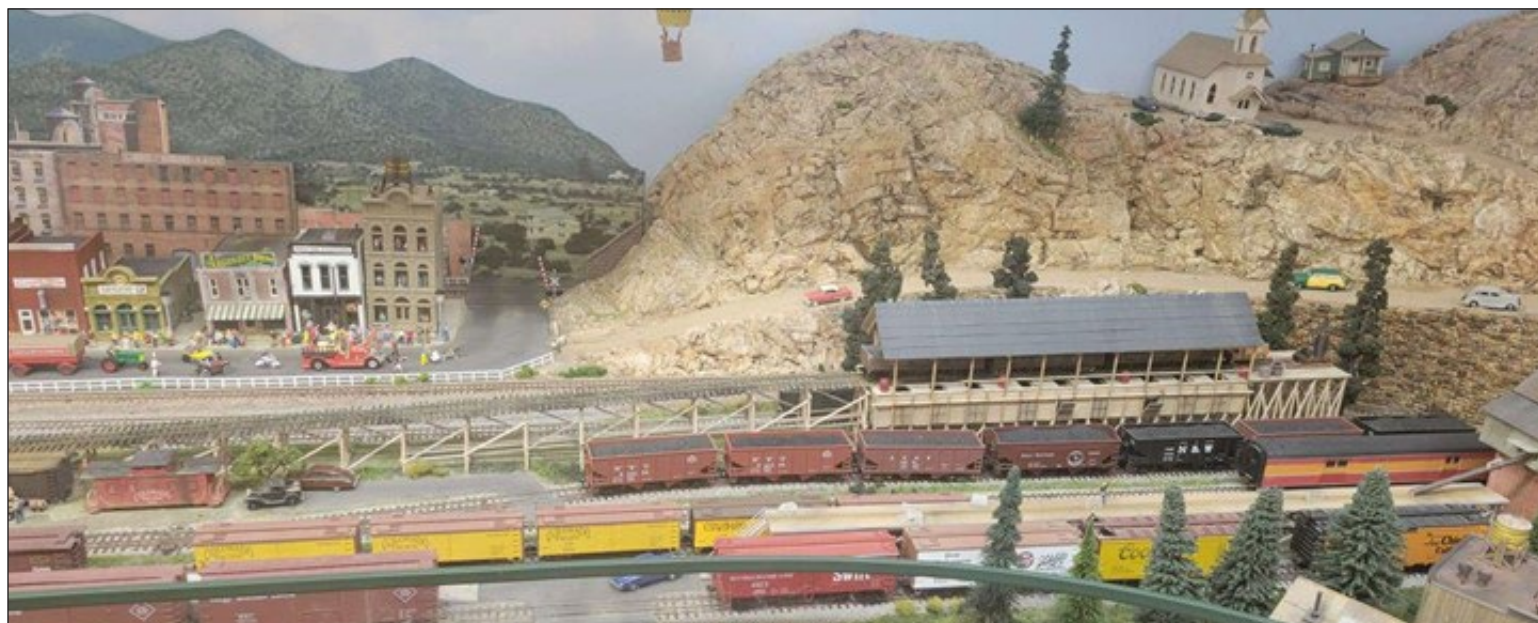
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...RRduino...

By Speed Muller

Dragging Coal with a Stepper?



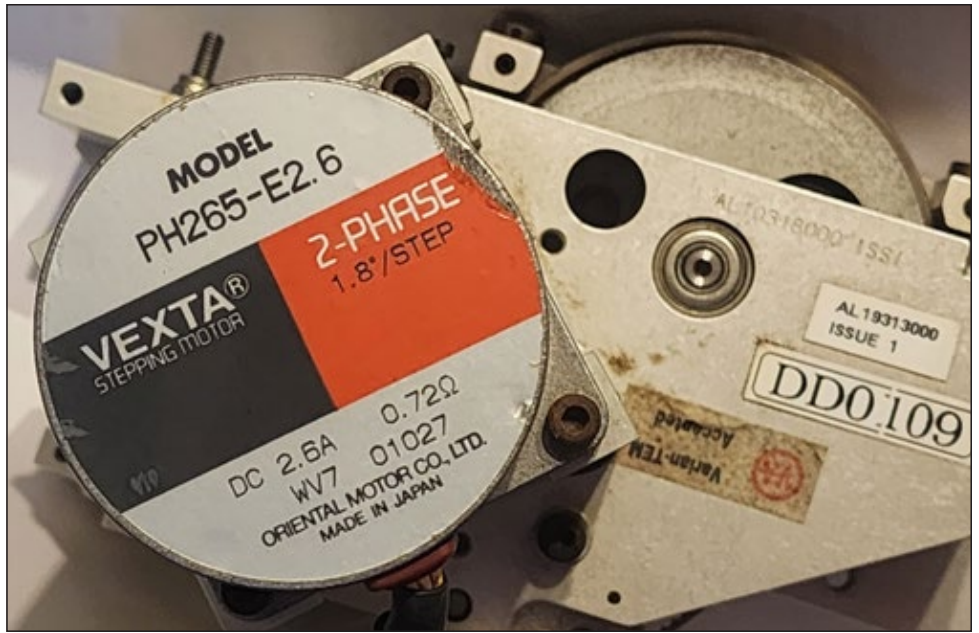
Salida needs coal! (Photo by Jerry Hoverson, MMR)



Steam donkey on the right, hoist car and three coal hoppers (Photo by Jerry Hoverson, MMR)

Way back in the 4th issue of 2017's Marker Lamp, we introduced stepper motors and how they are controlled with a little L9110S H-bridge circuit. This time we are going to go a little bigger or fancier and use a \$20 [DM542](#) stepper motor controller in between the Arduino and the Vexta, 2.6 Amp, [PH265-E2.6](#) stepping motor we have. It's clearly not in production any longer, but still available from various sources like [eBay](#).

This all started with a donkey-powered coal unloading project on the Rocky Mountain Central more than a year ago. Plan "A" was to use a continuous running servo to pull a thin wire onto a pulley to pull some cars up a slope to deliver the coal. Unwinding the pulley and wire would then use gravity to let all the cars go back down the hill. But, continuous running servos are not all that great for running forward, stopping and running backwards where the forward and backward speeds need to be the same. Especially if you only want "time" to determine how far you travel. For this to work well sensors are needed on

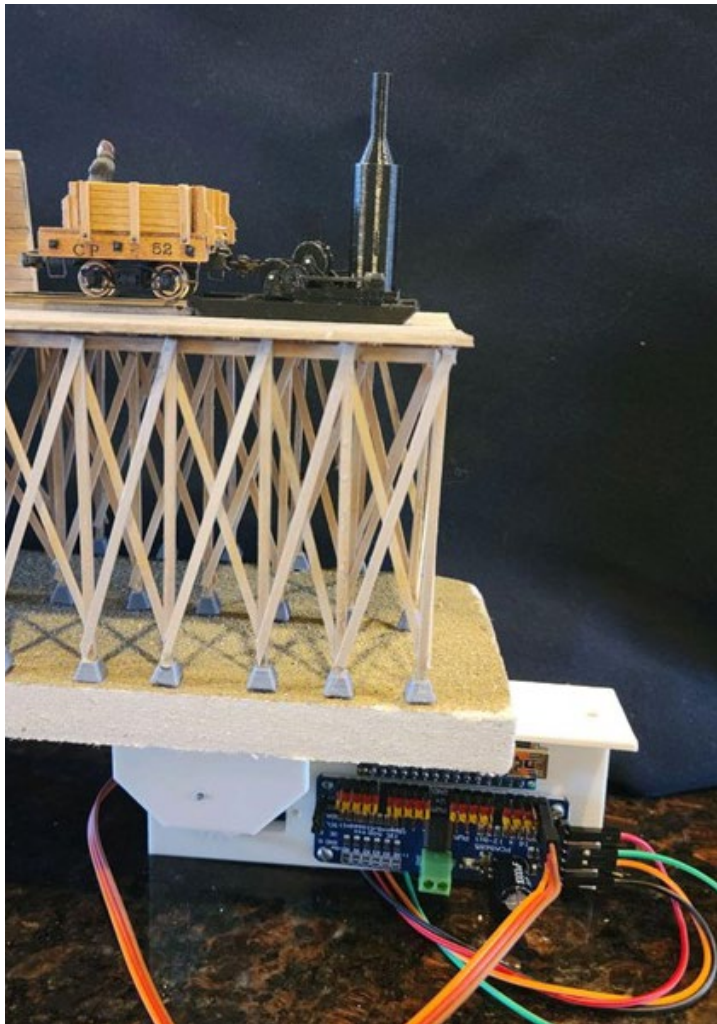


Vexta PH265-E2.6, 1.8° per step, 2.6 Amps

both ends to tell when to stop. Also not great when you want to slow down before you stop either. After a few attempts, all those prototypes and code were put aside.

So let's run through a few things needed for a successful project. The requirements are simple:

- Four inputs (a button to say "go to the Bottom," a button to say "go to the Top," a limit switch at the top to say we have reached Home and then a nice-to-have Emergency Stop to stop everything when we need to.
- Enough outputs to control a stepper motor, so there is Step and Direction (and Enable if you like, this module is enabled by default, so we passed)
- The always cool Heartbeat LED to show that the software is still running
- Debug on the Serial Port and a little bit of code to receive the furthest position (Bottom) across the port to store it in the [EEPROM](#) to allow future adjustments.
- Upon Power Up, find Home first (in this case Top)
 - » *Best instruction to users or the owner: let the steam donkey pull the hoist car back at the top when you are done with the day's work. Not likely as prototypical, but since we are only making an HO career out of this, we need to reduce the tractive software effort by 87 too!*
- When Home had been found, position Zero is set, only then allow travel to the Bottom
- At any point with Home found, you can press the Up or Down button, and go to that end, even if you interrupt the current travel direction.
- And pressing the E-Stop (emergencies do happen) then do just that, cancel the current command and stop. And then the

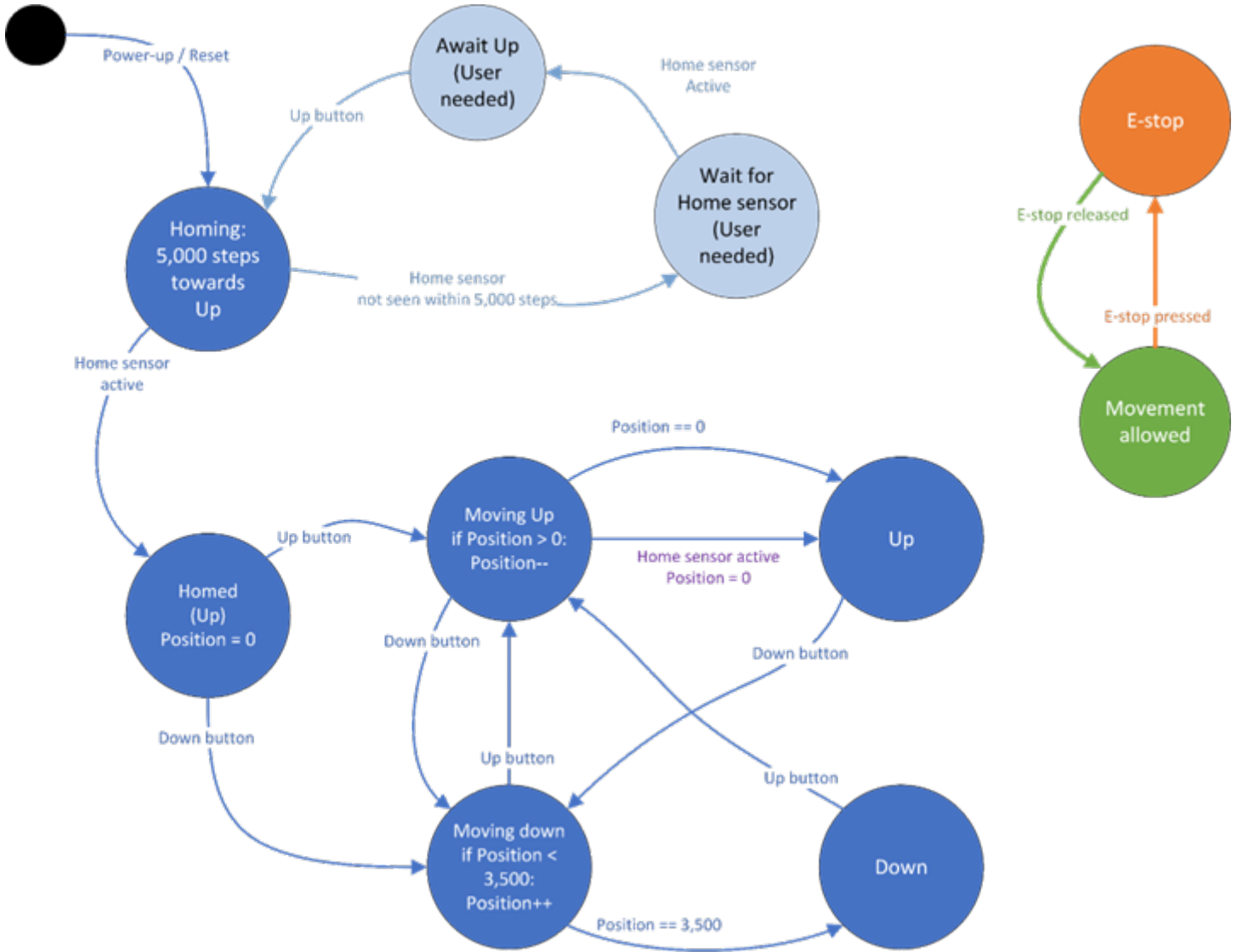


Servo driver at the bottom and a steam donkey at the top (Photo by Jerry Hoverson, MMR)

E-stop is released, only then allowing a new destination to be selected. So if your E-stop input is momentary and not the real big red button, then it would simply stop the current motion and wait for a new instruction.

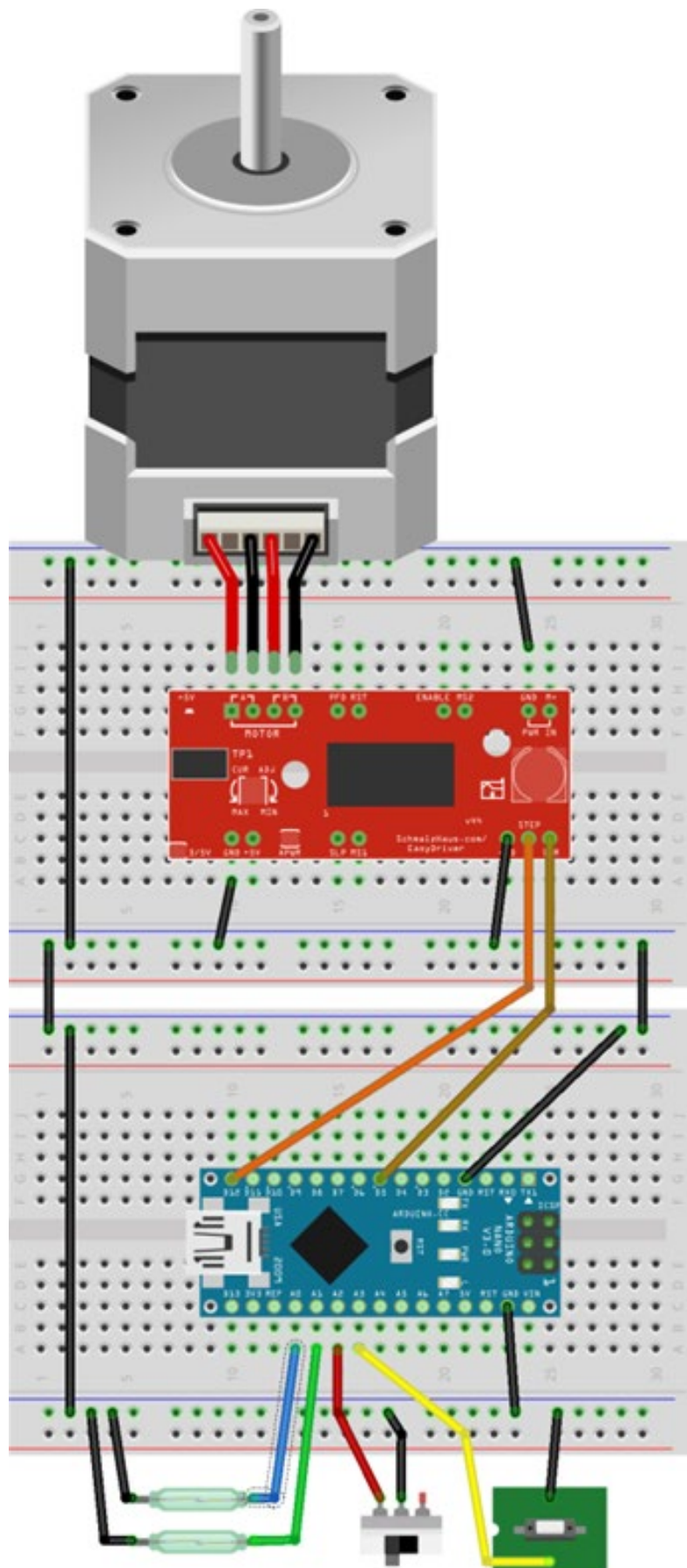
The state machine is shown below, with a few things simplified: Run until reaching Home, or until 5,000 steps are reached in the first bubble. Keep going down until the Bottom position is reached, or Up is pressed. Same for the going up until Up or Home is reached. And not shown perfectly, when E-stop is pressed, motion stops, and when released, waits for Up or Down.

(For those who are new, this Finite State Machine always starts at the black circle and as things happen, you follow the line in the direction of the arrow, if that action is allowed and has occurred. For example, when in the light blue circle states, the Down button has no effect on anything, so if press it 20 times and then let it be, there will be no action.)



Find Home, Up-Down Finite State Machine with Emergency Stop

So next thing to know is how it is all wired up, since pins need to be made INPUT with PULLUPS and others need to be OUTPUTS. The wiring diagram is shown on the next page. Of course the DM542 is represented by the tiny red board between the motor and the Nano, but the STEP (PUL+) and DIR (DIR+) are indicated in the same places. Also note that the DM542 has PUL- and DIR- connections that need to be connected to GND. Power is omitted, the DM542 runs in this case on 24 Vdc and the Nano is powered with a 5 Vdc USB phone charger.



Wiring Diagram

fritzing

And then there is the code. *(The complete source code is online, see link at the end)* We are not going to show the Heartbeat class here, except for the update() function taking a variable to print on the Serial Port. Now we can show with every heartbeat how far we still need to travel:

```
// Check state, and then if it is time, and then toggle if so
void update( int32_t stepsToGo ) {
    unsigned long ulNow = millis( );
    if( bPinHigh ) {
        if( ulNow - ulPrevious > ulTimeoutOn ) {
            ulPrevious = ulNow;
            writeLo( );
            Serial.println( stepsToGo );
        } // if
    } else {
        if( ulNow - ulPrevious > ulTimeoutOff ) {
            ulPrevious = ulNow;
            writeHi( );
        } // if
    } // else
} // void update( int32_t )
```

The main .ino sketch with first the defines and variables:

```
#define VERSION_STR "RMC Coal Unload Stepper Controller, ver 0.04, 2023.05.15"
/*
 * TODO: Serial and EEPROM to save MAXPOS.
 */
#include "Heartbeat.h"
#include "StepperDM542.h"

// define constants
#define DEBUG true
#define BAUDRATE 115200

#define LEDPIN 13
#define GOHOMEBUTTONPIN A0
#define GOBOTTBUTTONPIN A1
#define ESTOPBUTTONPIN A2
#define HOMEPIN A3
#define DIRPIN 5
#define STEPPIN 12
#define LEDPIN1 13

#define TIMEOFF 950
#define TIMEON 50

#define STEPTIMEON 20
#define STEPTIMEOFF 2

bool bEStop;
bool bWaitForEstopRelease = false; bool bAwayPressed = false;
bool bWaitForHomeRelease = false; bool bHomePressed = false;
bool bWaitForAwayRelease = false; bool bEStopPressed = false;

Heartbeat myHeart = Heartbeat( LEDPIN1, TIMEON, TIMEOFF );
StepperDM542 myStepper = StepperDM542( STEPPIN, HOMEPIN, DIRPIN, STEPTIMEON, STEPTIMEOFF );
```


Then the `setup()` function: starting everything up, serial port baudrate, welcome message so you can find the code on your computer in 5 years, setting up the inputs with pullups on the user switches home, bottom and E-stop. And then sending the motor to find Home:

```
void setup( ) {
  Serial.begin( BAUDRATE );          // baud rate to PC, (Ctrl+Shift+M)
  pinMode( GOHOMEBUTTONPIN, INPUT_PULLUP );
  pinMode( GOBOTTBUTTONPIN, INPUT_PULLUP );
  pinMode( ESTOPBUTTONPIN, INPUT_PULLUP );

  myHeart.begin( );
  myStepper.begin( );

  Serial.println( );
  Serial.println( VERSION_STR );

  ulNow = ulPrevious = millis( );

  myStepper.goHome( ); // Since we don't know home yet, but it only moves with .update()
  Serial.println( "Going Home!" );

  bEStop = false;
} // void setup( )
```

In the `loop()` function, of course running over and over, we handle all the button presses and then update `myHeart` and `myStepper`:

```
void loop( ) {
  bool buttonHome   = !digitalRead( GOHOMEBUTTONPIN );
  bool buttonAway   = !digitalRead( GOBOTTBUTTONPIN );
  bool bButtonEstop = !digitalRead( ESTOPBUTTONPIN );

  if( myStepper.isHoming( ) ) {
    // do nothing with buttons while homing
  } else {
    if( buttonHome ) {
      if( !bWaitForHomeRelease ) {
        myStepper.stop( );    delayMicroseconds( 50 );
      } // if !bWaitForHomeRelease
      bWaitForHomeRelease = true;
    } // if( buttonHome )

    if( !buttonHome && bWaitForHomeRelease ) {
      myStepper.stop( );
      bWaitForHomeRelease = false;
      bHomePressed = true;
      delay( 10 );
    } // if !buttonHome && bWaitForHomeRelease

    if( bHomePressed ) {
      bEStop = false;
      bHomePressed = false;
      myStepper.goHome( );
    } // if bHomePressed

    if( buttonAway ) {
      if( !bWaitForAwayRelease ) {
        myStepper.stop( );    delayMicroseconds( 50 );
      }
    }
  }
}
```



```

    } // if( !bWaitForAwayRelease )
    bWaitForAwayRelease = true;
} // if buttonAway

if( !buttonAway && bWaitForAwayRelease ) {
    myStepper.stop( );
    bWaitForAwayRelease = false;
    bAwayPressed = true;
    delay( 10 );
} // if !buttonAway && bWaitForAwayRelease

if( bAwayPressed ) {
    bEStop = false;
    bAwayPressed = false;
    myStepper.goToAway( );
} // if bAwayPressed
} // if not homing

// check E-stop
if( bButtonEstop ) {
    bEStop = true;    // do E-stop
    Serial.println( F("\nE-Stop enabled!!!") );
    bWaitForEstopRelease = true;
    myStepper.stop( );
    delay( 1000 );    // delays are bad, but E-stop is more important
} // if bButtonEstop

if( bWaitForEstopRelease && !bButtonEstop ) {
    bEStop = false;
    bWaitForEstopRelease = false;
    Serial.println( F("\nE-Stop released!") );
    delay( 200 );    // only a debounce, since nothing else is happening
} // if bWaitForEstopRelease && !bButtonEstop

// Always beat the heart and show some debug on serial port
myHeart.update( myStepper.getStepsToGo( ) );

if( !bEStop ) {
    myStepper.update( );
} // if not E-stop
} // void loop( )

```

And then of course there is the StepperDM542.h file with the stepper controller class, with most of the debug statements removed to save some space, see the files online for that extra help:

```

/*
 * StepperDM542 class
 * Control a DM542 to move a Stepper Motor implemented with a home sensor
 * and position control after homed
 * Author: Speed Muller, 2023.05.14
 */

#define BOTPOS  2880
#define MAXPOS  3000

class StepperDM542 {
private:
    uint8_t u8StepOutputPin;
    uint8_t u8DirOutputPin;

```



```

uint8_t u8HomeInputPin;
bool bPinHigh;

uint32_t u32StepsSoFar = 0;
uint32_t u32CommandedPos = 1;
uint32_t u32CurrentPos = 1;
bool bRunning = false;
bool bHomed = false;
bool bIsHoming = false;    // continue to run backwards until "home" is found
bool bAtHome = false;     // away from home by default

unsigned long ulTimeoutOn;
unsigned long ulTimeoutOff;
unsigned long ulPrevious;

// Write pin HI
void writeHi( ) {
    digitalWrite( u8StepOutputPin, HIGH );
    bPinHigh = true;
} // void writeHi( )

// Write pin LOW
void writeLo( ) {
    digitalWrite( u8StepOutputPin, LOW );
    bPinHigh = false;
} // void writeLo( )

// Read and write the opposite
void toggle( ) {
    digitalWrite( u8StepOutputPin, !digitalRead( u8StepOutputPin ) );
} // void toggle( )

public:
// Constructor
StepperDM542( uint8_t u8TheStepPin, uint8_t u8TheHomePin, uint8_t u8TheDirPin, unsigned
long ulTheTimeoutOn, unsigned long ulTheTimeoutOff ) {
    u8StepOutputPin = u8TheStepPin;
    u8DirOutputPin = u8TheDirPin;
    u8HomeInputPin = u8TheHomePin;
    ulTimeoutOn = ulTheTimeoutOn;
    ulTimeoutOff = ulTheTimeoutOff;
    bPinHigh = false;
    u32StepsSoFar = 0;
    u32CommandedPos = 2;
    u32CurrentPos = 2;
    bRunning = false;
    bIsHoming = false;
    bHomed = false;
    bAtHome = false;
} // constructor void Heartbeat( uint8_t, unsigned long, unsigned long )

// Set the pins and variables up
void begin( ) {
    ulPrevious = millis( );
    pinMode( u8StepOutputPin, OUTPUT );
    pinMode( u8DirOutputPin, OUTPUT );
    pinMode( u8HomeInputPin, INPUT_PULLUP );
    writeLo( );                // let's begin with off
    bAtHome = false;          // don't assume at home

```



```

    bIsHoming = false;
    bHomed     = false;
    u32StepsSoFar = 0;
    u32CommandedPos = 3;
    u32CurrentPos  = 3;           // assume zero, but not at thome
} // void begin ( )

// Return true if homing
bool isHoming( ) {
    return bIsHoming;
} // bool isHoming( )

// Let's go home
void goHome( ) {
    u32StepsSoFar = 0;
    if( bHomed ) {
        setCommandedPosition( 0 );
        Serial.println( "Go to zero!" );
    } else {
        bIsHoming = true;
        u32CommandedPos = 0;
        u32StepsSoFar = 0;
        Serial.println( "Find home..." );
    } // if previously homed
} // void goHome( )

// void cancel homing
void cancelHome( ) {
    bIsHoming = false;
} // void cancelHome( )

// Move away from home to away position
void goToAway( ) {
    u32StepsSoFar = 0;
    if( bHomed ) {
        bIsHoming = false;
        setCommandedPosition( BOTPOS );
    } // if and only if homed before
} // void goToAway( )

// Set position to go to (limited to MAXSTEPS)
int32_t setCommandedPosition( uint32_t u32ThePos ) {
    u32StepsSoFar = 0;

    if( u32ThePos <= BOTPOS ) {
        u32CommandedPos = u32ThePos;
    } else {
        Serial.println( F( "Not moving!" ) );
        return 0;
    } // if room to move

    int32_t i32Steps = (int32_t)u32CommandedPos - (int32_t)u32CurrentPos;
    return i32Steps;
} // int32_t setCommandedPosition( uint32_t )

// Stop right there and then
void stop( ) {
    bIsHoming = false;
    u32CommandedPos = u32CurrentPos;

```



```

    u32StepsSoFar = 0;
} // void stop( )

// Return how far to go
int32_t getStepsToGo( ) {
    return u32CommandedPos - u32CurrentPos;
} // int32_t getStepsToGo( )

// Check state, and then if it is time, and then toggle if so
void update( ) {
    bool bGoingForward = true; // moving away from home by default
    unsigned long ulNow = millis( );

    bAtHome = !digitalRead( u8HomeInputPin ); // active low
    if( bAtHome ) {
        if( u32CommandedPos > 0 ) {
        } else {
            u32CurrentPos = 0;
        } // only zero if heading towards home
    } // if home

    if( bIsHoming ) {
        if( bAtHome ) {
            bIsHoming = false;
            bHomed = true;
            u32CurrentPos = 0;
        } else {
            u32CurrentPos = 4;
            u32CommandedPos = 0;
        } // if at home
    } // if homing

    if( u32StepsSoFar >= MAXPOS ) {
        u32CurrentPos = u32CommandedPos;
    } // if too far!

    bGoingForward = u32CommandedPos >= u32CurrentPos;
    digitalWrite( u8DirOutputPin, bGoingForward );

    if( u32CurrentPos == u32CommandedPos ) {
        if( bRunning ) {
            Serial.println( "done" );
            bRunning = false;
        } // if bRunning
    } else {
        if( bPinHigh ) {
            if( ulNow - ulPrevious > ulTimeoutOn ) {
                ulPrevious = ulNow;
                if( u32CurrentPos > u32CommandedPos ) {
                    u32CurrentPos--;
                } else {
                    u32CurrentPos++;
                } // if ahead or behind
                writeLo( );
            } // if
        } else {
            if( ulNow - ulPrevious > ulTimeoutOff ) {
                ulPrevious = ulNow;
                writeHi( );
            }
        }
    }
}

```

```

    u32StepsSoFar++;
  } // if time to go high
} // else
bRunning = true;
} // if pulses to go
} // void update( )
}; // class StepperDM542

```

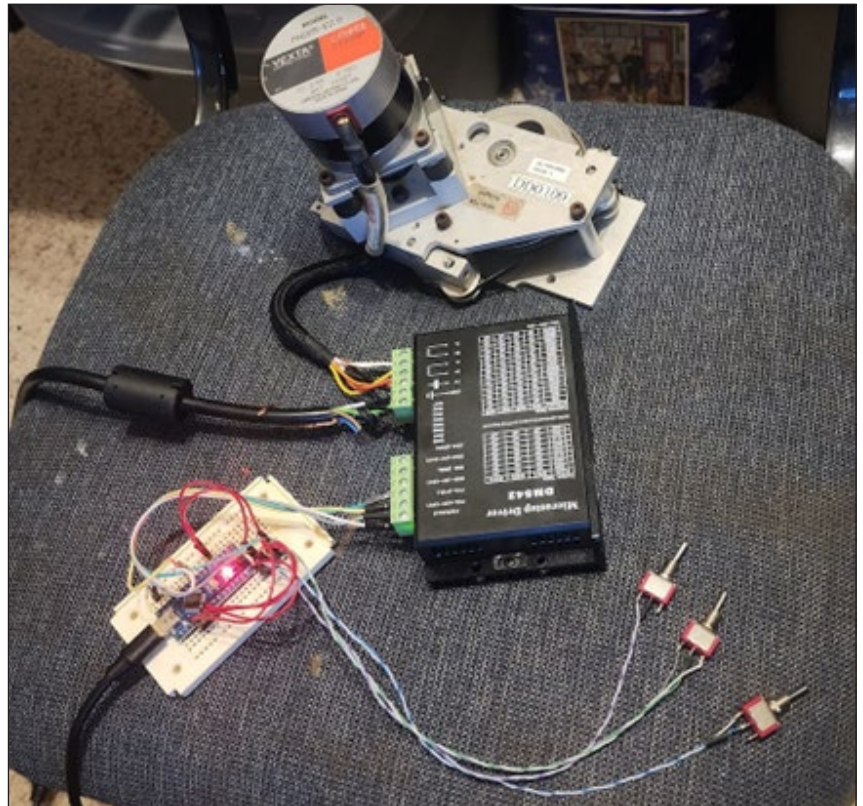
And there you have it, just take code from the [EEPROM article from Winter 2018](#) and allow the update over the serial port to a variable uint32_t u32BottomPos, instead of using BOTPOS.

The bigger stepper motor replacement and the fancy driver is now ready to be installed and the position for the “Bottom” waiting to be set!

Controlling the speed of the stepper is still a function you can add for homework, all you need to do is adjust the time it will take to “update” the next pulse to the motor controller.

All the code above is online at <https://github.com/nambabwe/other> as well as all code files from recent clinics.

-Speed



Stepper motor and controller, with the Arduino Nano and three switches



One last photo to show the thin rope connected to the steam donkey (photo by Jerry Hoverson, MMR)

Save The Date
February 15-17, 2024



WHERE THE EAGLE MEETS THE CHIEF
THE 2024 NMRA LONE STAR REGION CONVENTION
HOUSTON/PASADENA, TEXAS

Division 8
will be hosting the Lone Star Region Convention in 2024

It will start Thursday evening February 15th and
run through Saturday February 17 with the closing Banquet

It will have all the normal convention activities:

Clinics

Contest Room

Operating Sessions

Layout Tours

plus a Train Show - Convention attendees will get in 1 hour early!

Hotel and Registration coming soon - check the website at
www.turbotrains.com/2024lonestar

Chuck Lind, MMR and Bob Barnett, MMR, Co-Chairs



The Smithville, Houston & Indian Territory

by Bob Barnett, MMR

A long time ago, but not in a galaxy far, far away, there was a layout in Houston called the Smithville, Texas & Indian Territory (SH&IT). Due to the rather questionable railroad call letters we will call it the Katy Texas for this article. By the time I started visiting the layouts on the Fall Layout Tours in the late 1970's this layout was gone but somewhat legendary. The layout was located in Studewood, a slightly newer neighborhood adjacent to the better known Houston Heights. The neighborhood consisted mostly of craftsman era bungalows many with wide front porches. It was from one of these covered porches the layout was reached via a pull-down stairway. The Katy Texas was a two-rail O-scale railroad and modeled the Missouri-Kansas-Texas making it a double rarity in Texas at that time. Its builderowner was Fred Schmiedekind, Jr., and he knew the prototype MKT well. I was told years later that Fred's father was the Katy agent in Houston.

The Missing Link

Other than hearing "about the layout" from long-time Houston modelers I knew very little about it. That is until I was researching the LSR History for our new digital archives, and I discovered the 1965 Volume 11-Issue 3 Marker Lamp. That issue was "guest edited" by Robert (Bob) Jones of Fort Worth. Much of the content was a detailed wrap-up of the 1965 LSR Convention that had been held in Houston. And it provides a wealth of information on the early layouts in the Houston area such as:

- A three page article on John E. (Pop) Loeffler's layout.
- The first known write up on the Gil Freitag's Stoney Creek & Western.
- The first published track plan of the SC&W.
- A detailed description of Gus Freitag's Texas Northern layout.
- The earliest known description of the newly formed Houston Society of Model Engineers.
- Details on Ken Caulking's recently constructed Casey Lines.

The Smithville, Houston & Indian Territory

The layout was located at 943 Teetshorn Street in Houston. The attic room was 14' x 32' and the O-scale railroad had 60" minimum radius and number 6 switches. Construction began in October 1960 and Fred was aided in the construction by Dennis Grigassy, Ivan Nash and Joe Thompson. It is worth noting that all three of these gentlemen were longtime Houston area modelers and LSR members. Dennis still lives in the area, far out in deepest Fort Bend County. The layout's large yard was modeled after the "old" Katy Yard in Houston (I would assume that would be Katy's City Yard in downtown) and the town along the east wall, modeled after Katy, Texas. The layout operated with waybills and had battery powered headset telephone communications. Operations concentrated on yard switching and local freights. During the LSR layout tour three local young men were operating the layout. Jack Chism was dispatcher. Manning the throttles were Glen Hall and a "player to be named later".

The more things change, the more they stay the same

A recent new member to the San Jacinto Model Railroad club is Chris Roehl. Chris is well known in San Antonio having been active in SAMRA. He has been operating on several of the Houston area layouts including my own way up north in Navasota. Just a couple of days after he visited my railroad a group of us were having dinner before the San Jac monthly meeting. I took the opportunity to inquire:

Q: Did you grow up in San Antonio?

A: No, he spent several years in Houston and graduated high school in Houston.

Q: Were you interested in model railroading then?

A: Yes and he described visiting local hobby shops.

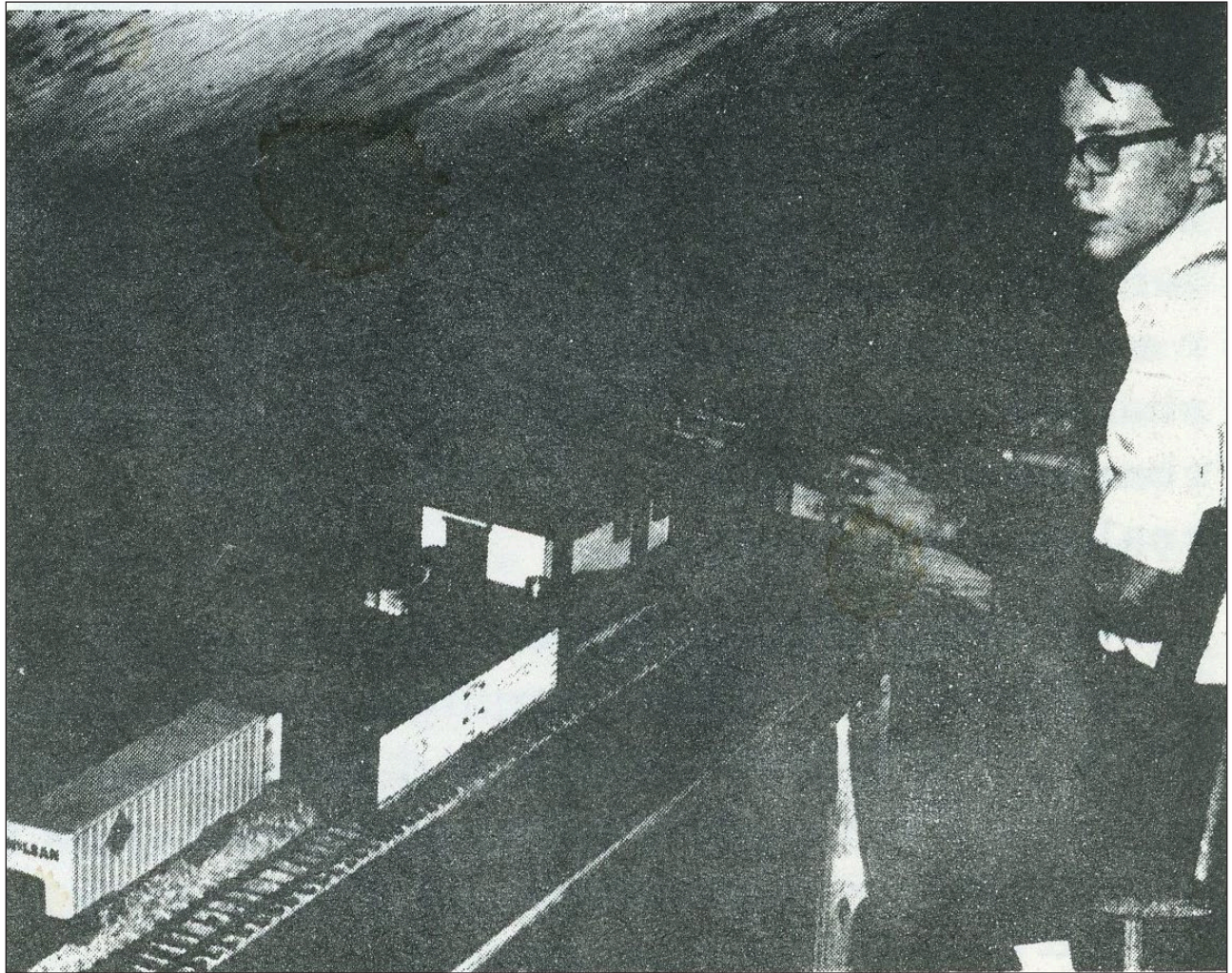
Q: Did you ever see an attic layout over in the Heights?

A: Yes, he operated there several times.

Robert W. Barnett, MMR

LSR Historian

So there you have it. As confirmed from the 1965 Marker Lamp article:



The only known photograph of Fred Schmiedekind's Smithville, Texas & Indian Territory shows a much younger Chris Roehl operating the layout way back in the summer of 1965.



Wire Her Up!

by Tom Pearson

Last issue we talked about the basic DCC terminology. This time we will talk about hooking DCC up to your layout.

First a couple more definitions:

- **Booster district** - All or part of the layout powered by a single DCC booster. This area is usually comprised of two or more power districts
- **Power District** - An isolated portion of a Booster district connected through a circuit breaker so shorts don't affect other parts of the layout. I look for areas where people are working and create power districts for these areas so one person causing a short doesn't affect others operating the layout.
- **Circuit Breaker** - An electronic device which cuts power to the rails if a short circuit is detected. Circuit breakers are adjusted to trip quicker and at a lower current than the booster. Note: Most boosters have built in circuit breakers which are rated at the maximum amperage the booster can deliver.
- **Track bus** - A pair of "heavier" gauge wires which run below the rails and are usually powered from a circuit breaker. The size of the wire is determined by the length of the bus. Here's a table of suggested lengths and wire sizes (most medium size layouts use 14 AWG):

Length of bus Minimum wire gauge able to carry 5 amps with only a 5% voltage drop

15 feet	18 AWG
20 feet	16 AWG
35 feet	14 AWG
50 feet	12 AWG
65 feet	10 AWG

The first thing to do is to install a 2 wire track bus under the layout roughly centered on the main line track. I run the wires 2-3 inches apart to avoid interference and make it easier to attach track feeders. Color coding is important. I usually using red and black for both the track bus and the track feeders. I also try to keep the track at least 6 inches away from any 110 volt cords running along the bottom of the benchwork.

Ideally, you can attach a pair of feeders to every section of track, but if you solder the rail joiners, I have found that spacing them 6 feet apart is fine. I use 20-22 AWG wire for track feeders. Using extra track feeders reduces the

dependency on rail joiners.

Soldering is the best way to attach track feeders to the track bus, but soldering requires special care and attention. I like to use self stripping connectors which most people call "suitcase" connectors. The 3M 905 Scotchlok is a good choice for joining 14-18 AWG track buses to 18-22 AWG track feeders. (Note: There are some look-alike red suitcase connectors being sold which can only handle an 18 gauge bus wire.)

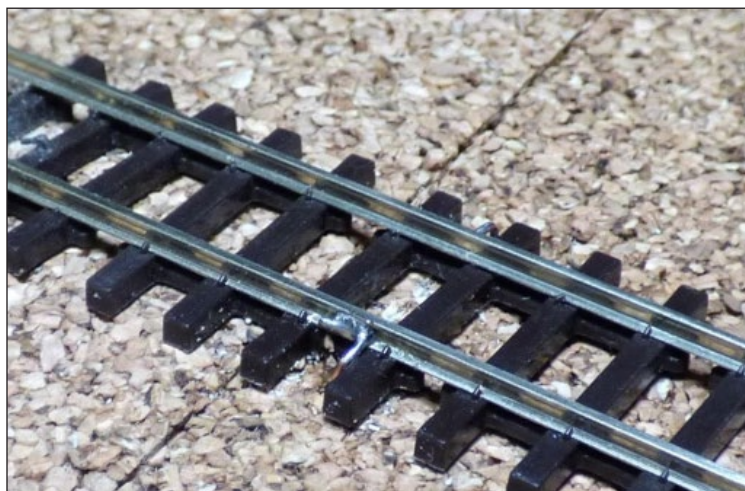
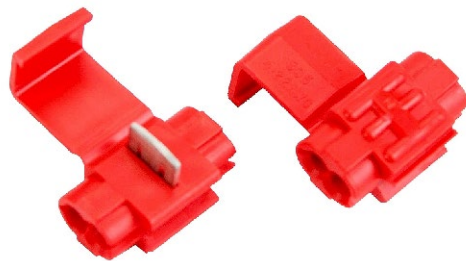
Finally, one last definition:

- **Throttle bus** - this is a separate cable which connects the command station to the small panels where throttles are plugged in, and/or other devices like radio transceivers. The throttle bus should be run at least 6 inches away from a track bus and any 110 volt wiring attached to the benchwork Note: Some brands of DCC systems use the throttle bus to connect many types of devices. Other systems have different buses for connecting radio transceivers also separate buses for connecting additional boosters.

I have mentioned 110 volt wiring a couple of times. I recommend against attaching extension cords or sections off plastic jacketed wiring to the bottom of the layout. If you really want to have easy access to 110 volts, install metal jacketed cable to connect your outlets.

All for now. **ML**

(Top) 3M Scotchlok Connectors
(Below) Connecting Track Feeders (NMRA Photo)



Do you live in central Texas?



Whether you're new to model railroading,
want a large layout but don't have the room,
or just want to hang out with friends...

Come join us!

We're an HO scale modular club with regular meetings in the Austin area.
Members participate in many ways, from software to scenery to operations.



Check out all our website at austinrailway.org for more information and how to join.
You can also reach us at info@austinrailway.com or (512) 836-5275.



Board of Directors Meeting Notes

MINUTES OF THE LONE STAR REGION BOARD MEETING via Zoom – June 4, 2023

President Donna Orr called the Annual Board meeting to order at 2:05 PM.

Roll call

All of the officers, directors and committee chairpersons were present except:

Voting Board Members:

Darrell Cowles
Michael Harang
Rod Fredericks
Don Kimmell

Non-voting Board Members:

Bill Dryden
Riley Triggs

Visitors

None.

Motion 1: Minutes of Previous Meeting

Secretary Jeff Palmer provided a motion and **Chuck Lind** seconded to dispense with the reading of the minutes and approve, as published the Minutes of the February 05, 2022 Semi-Annual Board of Directors meeting published in the **2022 Fall** issue of **The Marker Lamp**. The motion designated as 2023-06-04 LSR Motion 1 passed.

Officers Reports

President Donna Orr

Since we are trying to get the schedule current on the Marker Lamps, so that they will coincide with the actual quarters of our fiscal year, this will be a short message from your President.

Our Main event this year is not our regional convention, but our National convention. And to let everyone know, this 2023 convention committee is working long hours very effectively to get this accomplished. The people on

the committee from our region are from Divisions 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6. Also people on that committee from out of the Region. We have had many hurdles to overcome, but they are working out.

Because of all the talk I would like to explain here about the banquet, so everyone knows what is really going on. The banquet cost was \$135. Most feel that this is quite a high price for a banquet. And this price was being subsidized by the convention. The actual price for the per person plate was \$144, (this includes a mandatory 25% gratuity). And the cost of the speaker was not even put into this cost. So many may be upset about the cost, but it was bare minimum unless the convention takes on all cost and loses money.

The convention committee is working another idea with the Gaylord. We will have what they call the "small plate" venue. There are several good meat dishes on this venue, but it is what it is, "small plate". With this each person will get hors d'oeuvres, the small plate meal and a dessert. Drinks will be coffee, tea, water. There will be an open cash bar. This cost to each person will be \$56. But keep this in mind. That is not the real cost. The convention is also subsidizing this, so that more people can attend the final event of the 2023 convention. We will be limiting the number to 400. There will still be a short program with our speaker, Spencer Christian. And of course, our National President will have a few words to say, along with your LSR President.

When the convention was originally set up to be brought here, the LSR Board of Directors agreed not to have a Regional Convention in the same year. But the LSR was promised some gain in return. We are trying to accomplish this.

If you have questions about this convention or anything pertaining to it, please email or call me. I would appreciate that in place of rumors that are not correct floating around.

Since the LSR is not having a convention this year. I will be hosting a general membership meeting on Tuesday, August 22, 2023 in San Saba 2, from 4pm – 6pm.

Vice -President Ray Byer

Well, another year has come and gone. As you may know, the LSR is not having a yearly convention due to the NMRA convention in Dallas area. But the good news Houston is having one in February of 2024, so look for more information to come about this convention later. So, let's talk about the future LSR Convention, hopefully we will have one in 2025 (plans are in the works). But one of the big problems is no one is stepping up to host them. Years back we had a five to a six cities in rotation with the special convention to break up the rotation. It is slow coming down to two or three in the rotation hoping we can get a host group wishing to do a convention.

So, you have to ask yourself (question to the Board of Directors), do we really need a convention? That's a hard question to answer, some people will automatically say, "Yes we do, we have been going to them for years," or, "The LSR has been doing them for over 50 years." But the numbers do not show that - the numbers are going down each year. So, let's look at some facts, the LSR in the past years have been hosting them in different parts of the year, sometimes in the early, in the middle of the year or in the fall, before school lets out, before prom, later or on graduation weekend, on father day weekend, etc.... It's hard for families to plan to come nor is it cost affordable sometimes. I know that you cannot please everyone, but we need to find a way to meet in the middle. Or we go back to the question, "Do need really need a convention". In the past I would have said "yes we need a year convention", but now I really do not know. I look at the national convention and the numbers they report and their numbers are down too, and soon they well be asking "Do they need a national convention too". Used to you'd go to a convention to learn how to do something, or you go to learn how to install DCC decoder, or how to build a switch using Fast Track. Now we have You Tube, someone can go to find whatever they are working on now, today, this minute. How does a National, Regional convention compete? That's a good question, I hope someone can answer that question. Soon the Annual Convention will be no more, it's been replaced with Zoom, You Tube, Discord, or more platforms that are not in service today. Me, I think convention are still a good idea.

For a Annual Convention to work we need to pick a particular time of the year and stay with that part of the year. This way everyone knows that July 15th is the Annual LSR Convention each year or we hold the Annual Convention every two years. Just an idea. The LSR needs more cities in the rotation like San Antonio, Brownville, Corpus Christi, Kerrville, New Orleans, Monroe, and more. If these cities do not have layout to operate on then have

some kick-ass clinics or photo spots to watch or take photos or trains or museums - anything that will bring the membership to that convention in that area. As Chuck Lind always said, "Think outside the Box". Because if we do not start thinking outside the box, someone will come by and close it and there will be no more LSR convention.

I know I was talking to the Board of directors, but you the membership of the Lone Star Region, this is your Region, this is your Convention, this is your Divisions, this is your NMRA. Get involved with your Division, get involved with the Region, hell just get involved. By you getting involved with the organization. You find out that you can do more than what you were think that was poseable and who knows you might be the next MMR.

Secretary Jeff Palmer

Since our February 4, 2023 BOD meeting, the LSR Secretary worked with the Nomination Chair, Pete Leach, to hold the 2022 LSR Officers election in March. The first phase of the process is to identify the candidates, and obtain their profile. This phase was closed on December 1, 2022. The second phase was to turn all of the profiles over to the web chair and the building of the election website - <https://geekwithtrains.com>. The last phase is to report back to the Nomination Chair with the online results to be merged with the snail mail results. This has been done and the results are in – see Nomination Chair Report.

In each of the months since the BOD meeting, the secretary posted the NMRA Roster Reports.

Currently the secretary is trying to pull together the various reports from the other LSR Officers and Chairs in preparation of the May 5, 2022 BOD meeting. The cooperation of the officers and chairs is greatly appreciated.

Looking forward to the 2023 National Convention in Grapevine.

One last note, please remember in your reporting that education is our prime directive and to hi-lite it where possible in your reporting.

Treasurer Gert "Speed" Muller

First, thank you to all for all the support over the last 6 years, it was a great honor to keep watch over our monies. Next, congratulations and welcome to Steve Sandifer for taking the LSR checkbook into the future!

You might get your numbers to show up in black and white again. ;)

We still have Delattre Fund money for new members in or after their service in any of the forces, so please recruit at least 6 more! We received a small donation from the Plano train show, thank you. The NMRA membership rebate increased from \$783 to \$838, so somewhere we are gaining members, good work!

Hope to see you at the 2023 Texas Express convention in Grapevine!

Financial Year, 2022/2023:

Beginning Balances (2022/05/01)

LSR Unrestricted Accounts	\$43,265.34
Beginning Total LSR Net Worth	\$43,265.34
Bob Clarke Award Fund	\$ 528.86
Division 7 Rebate in Escrow	\$ 150.50
Delattre Fund	\$ 578.00
Outstanding check(s)	\$ 58.00
Bank Saldo at bank	\$44,580.70

Proceeds

Pike Ads	\$ 24.00
NMRA Rebate	\$ 1621.00
Plano Train Show Donation	\$ 86.25
Temple Convention Proceeds	\$ 896.18
Total Proceeds	\$ 2627.43

Disbursements

Youth Chair Expenses	\$ 153.44
Youth Membership	\$ 80.00
Marketing	\$ 575.00
President Awards	\$ 150.00
NMRA Rebates to Divisions	\$ 810.50
Website Expenses	\$ 616.21
Convention Contest Award Expenses	\$ 406.00
Total Disbursements	\$ 2791.15
Net Proceeds-Disbursements	\$ -163.72

Updates to Restricted Funds:

Delattre Fund	\$ 0.00
Bob Clarke Award	\$ -80.00
Division 7 Rebate into Escrow	\$ 22.00
Change in Liabilities	\$ -58.00

Ending Balances (2023/04/30)

LSR Unrestricted Accounts Total	\$43,101.62
Total LSR Net Worth	\$43,101.62
Bob Clarke Award	\$ 448.86
Division 7 Rebate in Escrow	\$ 172.50
Delattre Fund	\$ 578.00
Outstanding check(s)	\$ 40.00
Bank Saldo at bank	\$43,340.98

Advisor Chuck Lind

I served on the Contest committee along with Jeff, Ray and Duane to outline contest concerns that came up at the last Board meeting.

Director and Department Reports

[Director and Chair Reports as given are included in their usual sections later in the Marker Lamp -Ed.]

Old Business

Donna Orr opened old business by welcoming everyone to the meeting. The first order of business was the report on the financial audit. The audit covered the fiscal year May 1, 2022 to April 30, 2023. He reported that all was well.

The next order of business was the contest rule report. While nothing was changed concerning how contest judging was done, greater clarification was provided: The first order of business was to update the decades' old estimation of contest awards cost from \$2.00 per LSR convention registration to the \$10.00 value of today's cost for plaques - **2023-06-04 LSR Motion 2**. The main purpose of this value is to allow the convention host committee to allow for the cost of contest awards for their convention. The motion Passed.

The next order of contest room business was to update and clarify the judging process as it is performed by the LSR. It also allowed the contest to be cancelled for a lack of judges to perform the necessary tasks. This information needed to be updated in two locations, the LSR By-Laws and in the LSR Contest Rules and Convention Guide:

2023-06-04 LSR Motion 10 – By-Laws update
2023-06-04 LSR Motion 11 – Contest Rules and Convention Guide

Both motions passed.

This ended Old Business.

New Business

The first order of new business in the installation of **New Officers** by **Donna Orr**. **2023-06-04 LSR Motion 3** contained the following elected officers:

Donna Orr – LSR President
Steve Sandifer – LSR Treasurer
Dick Brannan – Division 1 Director
Charles Goodrich – Division 3 Director
Brooks Willig – Division 5 Director
Don Kimmell – Division 7 Director

Donna welcomed the new officers and thanked the departing officers for their service. **2023-06-04 LSR Motion 3** was made by **Jeff Palmer**, seconded by **Pete Leach**, no discussion ensued and the motion was ratified unanimously.

Steve Sandifer provided a budget report for the 2023/2024 fiscal year. No real discussion followed the purposed budget. **2023-06-04 LSR Motion 4**, the purposed budget passed.

Jeff Palmer addressed the issue of deleting ballots after an election. He pointed out that the only thing secret in an election is who-voted-for-whom, otherwise all other information is fair game. While reporting results, the who-voted-for-whom is cleared (deleted). **Donna Orr** pointed out that in the case of a disputed election, the LSR wants 60 days of retention. That can be accomplished.

Bob Thiele introduced **2023-06-04 LSR Motion 5**. The motion is to create a Google Drive for backup and sharing of LSR information. Presently, LSR information is stored in two locations. Host Gator, the current web hosting service for the LSR, has all executable code for the website and LSR officer data, like motions, minutes, roster, etc. The second site, Archive.org has all the public shareable information, clinics, Marker Lamp, candidate profiles, etc. Both sites are backed up for recoverability. After some discussion, the motion was called to vote and passed.

Ray Byer introduced **2023-06-04 LSR Motion 6**. Ray opened the discussion by thanking those LSR members who have given their personal resources to further the LSR/NMRA efforts, but pointed out that the LSR needs to step up and own and manage those resources, such as web hosting accounts or email services. A short discussion followed, the motion was called to vote and passed.

Chuck Lind introduced **2023-06-04 LSR Motion 7**. Recently, the NMRA has made a number of improvements to their systems and the way membership information was being handled was one of those changes. Going forward, the LSR President (Donna Orr) and the appointed Membership Chair (Ken Kaiser) would be handling of the membership reports. To facilitate that transition, the LSR By-Laws needed to be updated to reflect this change. No discussion flowed, and the LSR By-Laws changes were voted on and approved.

Charles Goodrich brought before the BOD **2023-06-04 LSR Motion 8**. This motion allows the LSR to buy a sponsorship to the Plano Train Show. The advantages for doing this are numerous, but the main reason is it allows the NMRA recruiting table to be placed in the main hall which gives the LSR access to the main traffic flow for the show. In years past, being in the main hall has allowed the volunteers to recruit on average 12 new memberships per show (fall and winter). This was followed by a discussion that pointed out that this type of sponsorship was open to any division. As the discussion advanced, Steve Sandifer pointed out that the current budget did not have a provision for this expenditure, and raised the question, should this be a budgeted item? After some discussion, a motion, **2023-06-04 LSR Motion 12**, was made, 2nd, voted on and passed. Passing Motion 12, allowed the discussion for Motion 8 to proceed within the current budget, and Motion 8 was seconded and voted on, and it passed.

Bob Thiele introduced **2023-06-04 LSR Motion 9**. One of the areas that the LSR has been weak in is social media. The motion turned our attention Riley Triggs' new responsibility as Publicity Chair. Facebook, Instagram, and other social media platforms are new to the LSR. The motion places the responsibility for those platforms on the Publicity Chair. The motion was seconded, and passed with an air of excitement for the new chair.

Peter Kazmir, Publications Chair, brought to the attention of the BOD, that the Marker Lamp does not have a comprehensive ad policy. Peter purposed to officially support multiple ad sizes and types, adjust the rates across those sizes and types to be fair to all, and implement an official policy regarding free content.

Specifically, the proposed ad rates were:

- Full page - \$50/year
- Half page (horizontal or vertical) - \$30/year
- Quarter page (horizontal only) - \$15/year
- Pike Ads (1/8 page) remain \$8/year, and are limited to model railroads and clubs.

In addition, we will establish a policy that will allow the NMRA, LSR Divisions and 100% NMRA Clubs (and train shows hosted by those organizations) to "advertise" up to half page ads for free. Beyond that they would receive a \$30/year discount off regular rates (so a full page ad would be \$20/year). Non-national organizations outside of the LSR (say, another division) would pay regular rates. There would be two exceptions to these policies:

1. The NMRA National Convention gets up to two full pages for free (no matter who's hosting it), and
2. The LSR gets unlimited free space (for the LSR

Convention, the Youth Award, and so on). Using Peter's proposal, Jeff Palmer purposed **2023-06-04 LSR Motion 13** which was seconded and passed.

Donna Orr talked about a number of items she learned through the NMRA RAC meetings she attends. Apparently, the NMRA has decided to provide matching funds for membership retention. Details to follow. The NMRA is also reviewing its national branding. Again, details to follow.

Donna Orr also reminded us that there are still funds available for new military LSR members.

Donna Orr then brought us to a discussion about future LSR conventions. What is the future of LSR Conventions. Do we need to change the format? Do we need to change the days of the convention? What do you look for in a convention? For me, I love the clinics and the comradery. I like getting back together with my friends and catching up. One of the problems is attendance. We are being told that the northern divisions will not attend a southern hosted convention. Why? Is the apathy so great that avoiding the convention is somehow better than what you get out of attending? We want your ideas!

Donna Orr then spoke to the 2023 NMRA National Convention being held in Grapevine. There are apx. 650 people registered. The clinics are almost filled and the vendors are showing up to advertise their wares.

Bob Barnett and **Chuck Lind** talked about the 2024 LSR Convention. It will be held in **Pasadena, Texas** at the Pasadena Convention Center. Reserve February 15-17, 2024 on your calendar.

Donna Orr introduced the 2025 LSR Convention in **Baton Rouge, Louisiana**. Date yet to be determined.

Donna Orr called for volunteers to help review the LSR Constitution and LSR By-Laws. Donna had legal counsel review the constitution and by-laws and determined these two documents are out of sync. While the constitution provides the frame work for the organization, it contains specifics that need to be in the by-laws; the by-laws set the standards and processes performed by the LSR organization. **Ray Byer, Peter Kazmir, Chuck Lind, and Jeff Palmer** volunteered to be on the review committee.

Donna Orr motioned for the conclusion of the BOD meeting. Seconded by **Don Winn**. No discussion. Motion passed and the meeting concluded at 4:03 PM.



SP #5601 gets ready for a busy morning on George Zapalac's layout (George Zapalac Photo)



Meanwhile a crew is heading home on Steve Jackobs' Austin & Taylor & Pacific (Peter Kazmir Photo)



Chair and Director Reports

Achievement Program



by Duane Richardson, MMR
LSR Achievement Chair
pinecreekstation@verizon.net

Now that we are past the 20th and I have placed my last report with National, please see the below for all certificates awarded since our last annual meeting.

We awarded 25 certificates since the last report:

First	Last	Certificate	Date	LSR #
John	Romberger	Author	2/20/2023	874
Robert	Secrest	Volunteer	2/20/2023	875
Lourdes	McCleary	Cars	3/20/2023	876
Rash	Cole	Volunteer	3/20/2023	877
Paul	David	Scenery	3/20/2023	878
Paul	David	Electrical	3/20/2023	879
Randall	Wilson	Scenery	3/20/2023	880
Duran de And	Ing. Ezequiel	Structures	4/20/2023	881
Steven	Jackobs	Author	4/20/2023	882
Steven	Crise	Author	4/20/2023	883
Bob	Thiele	Vounteer	4/20/2023	884
Bob	Thiele	Official	4/20/2023	885
Philip	Stewart	Official	5/20/2023	886

We have 9 members who are very close with 6 certificates but sadly, some of these will not reach MMR. We do have at least 2 or 3 that are actively working on #7.

Contests



by Ray Byer
LSR Contest Co-Chair
raybyer@yahoo.com



and Jeff Palmer, MMR
LSR Contest Co-Chair
res06wqv@gte.net

With no convention this year, no contest, so, there isn't a lot to report.

The Contest Chairs' are presenting a number of Motions for BOD consideration, for By-Law changes, and Contest Rules clarification and revisions.

Conventions



by Joe Leising
LSR Conventions Chair
joe@leising.com

The 2023 Texas Express NMRA Convention will be here soon. Convention Chair Donna Orr and her dedicated staff of over 30 people have been working diligently to provide a memorable experience to convention attendees. Convention activities include amazing general interest, layout and prototype tours, make-n-take clinics, modeling with master's clinics, Arts & Crafts activities, SIG events, creating a mini-diorama, Project Linus and over 200 hours of additional clinics covering a wide range of model railroading topics.

Meet NMRA President Gordy Robinson at the Sunday night Kick-Off Reception, learn what is happening within the NMRA at the NMRA General Membership Meeting, and ask your questions at the Open Forum Meeting with Gordy. These are great opportunities for your voice to be heard and learn about current events within the NMRA.

There is limited seating for several convention activities, and some have already sold-out, or will be soon. Go to www.2023TexasExpress.com and select **Activities** to view details for the convention activities. Then use your convention registration confirmation and click on "Registration Changes" in the **Important Links** section to add activities to your convention experience. If you need your convention registration confirmation to be resent to you, send an email to Treasurer@2023TexasExpress.com.

Tickets to the Saturday Night Banquet have been reduced by nearly 60%, to only for \$56.00 for attendees with a full registration or day-pass that includes Saturday. Banquet attendees have a selection of four different entrées, so get your banquet ticket today and make your dinner selection.

Remember to take advantage of the convention's discounted NMRA room rate at the Gaylord Texan Hotel and Resort. Reservations can be made on the website by selecting **Reservations**. Make sure to make hotel reservations no later than August 3 to receive the convention's discounted room rate, saving 45% off the hotel's regular room rate.

Make time to attend the Annual LSR General Membership Meeting during the 2023 Texas Express Convention. The meeting is scheduled to take place on Tuesday, August 22nd from 4:00pm – 6:00pm in San Saba 2. Plan to attend and learn about the latest information happening within YOUR Lone Star Region.

Join your friends from around the world, and make new ones, at the 2023 Texas Express NMRA Convention, August 20 – 26, 2023. It has been 34 years since the last NMRA convention took place in Texas, so seize this opportunity to experience a NMRA National Convention in Texas.

Save the dates of February 15 – 17, 2024 for the Annual Lone Star Region Convention. LSR Texas Gulf Division and the San Jacinto Model Railroad Club have stepped up to host our regional convention in Pasadena, TX. Details to follow.

Education



by John Lorance, MMR
LSR Education Chair
new-london@sbcglobal.net

The LSR bylaws require semi-annual reports (in January and June) on activities being carried out in the division and region that support the LSR's and NMRA's education goals. The reporting period starts January 2023. To encourage more participation and faster turnaround, the below format no longer requires the names of clinics or presenters. Please do your best to remember what you did and no support documentation is required. This form is a Word document for ease of use to cut and paste into email, send as an attachment, or print and email to new-london@sbcglobal.net.

Division/LSR Officers Reporting:

- Convention Chair Joe Leising
- Division 4 Director Robert Thiel
- Division 6 Director Don Winn
- At Large Chairs Pete Leach
- At Large Chair Darrell Cowles
- Events Chair Bill Dryden

Number of Division Clinics Held: 18

Number of Clinics Presented as last Regional Convention: 0

Number of Division Contests Held: 0

Total Number of Entries: 0

Number of LSR Contests Held: 0

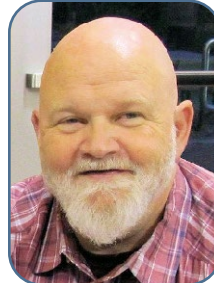
Total Number of Entries: 0

Number of Division Youth Activities Held: 7

Name(s) of Activities:

Scout Merit Badge, Operation Lifesaver

Events



by Bill Dryden
LSR Events Chair
bdr149@airmail.net

Although one of my better sources dropped off-line, I have found a couple of new sources for up-coming events and continually soliciting new events. I typically will visit the web site for each published event to assure that the site is still active and provides the reader with needed information concerning the respective show. Overall, I believe I am keeping up with the known events within our Region.

Anyone having events to be published, please send me the details: bdr149@airmail.net

A reminder to all:

Please consider our deadlines for submittals and publications to allow adequate lead time to correctly announce your event. *[The next two deadlines are the 15th of September and the 15th of November for publication at the end of those months. -Ed.]*

Historian



by Bob Barnett, MMR
LSR Historian
Barnett6@sbcglobal.net

We are getting underway on the Digital Archives for the LSR. So far I have written up two well-known railroads and two well-known model railroaders.

Written to date are:

1. The Houston society of model engineers with much help from former HSME President Art Bormann.
2. The Houston, Smithville and Indian Territory layout of Fred Schmiedekind in Houston.

Under construction are the histories of the:

1. Stony Creek and Western of Gil and Virginia Freitag- being prepared by Randall Wilson from the excellent private print book he did several years ago on the SC&W/
2. The Parallax Railroad of Larry Redmond being prepared in cooperation with Randall and Rick White who were regular operators on the Parallax.

Next up, several famous layouts around the LSR are next in line:

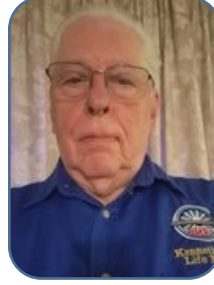
1. The Texas & Rio Grande of Bill McClanahan,
2. The Marquette Union Terminal of Cliff Robinson. Both of these have been published in the hobby press so information and limited photos are available. James Peterson furnished informative feedback on these famous early Dallas layout owners as his father was active with these modelers and James knew these layout owners in his youth.
3. Bob Clark's Ironhead Timber Company - Chuck Lind will undertake this one with input from the narrow gauge/ logging fraternity in the LSR.

Help needed: Three famous LSR layouts that are still up and running need in-depth documentation:

1. The Texas Western in Fort Worth.
2. The Cowtown Model Railroad Club (successor to the General Dynamics club layout).
3. San Antonio Model Railroad Club (SAMRA)- the lavishly detailed masterpiece in San Antonio.

We have LSR members who are active in these clubs (even some LSR Board Members), so expect a call or email for some old-fashioned arm twisting.

Membership



by Ken Kaiser
LSR Membership Chair
kbk1@flash.net

During the past six months the LSR has signed up 82 new members, OUTSTANDING. However, our membership only increased from 893 to 936 (43) because we also lost 39 members.

We need to do more to retain the members we have. One of the main reasons members indicate for not renewing their membership is the long drives to the meeting places. Our membership is aging and they are no longer able or willing to make the long drives. If your division is not conducting Zoom meetings, I recommend you consider initiating a Zoom meeting program.

New, change of address and re-rail members listed on the LSR monthly membership roster need to be contacted by Division Directors and invited to attend your next membership meeting.

It appears that many divisions are unaware of the LSR free new member veteran program. Details will shortly be sent to all Division Directors.

Nominations



by Pete Leach, MMR
LSR Nominations Chair
pleachtx55@gmail.com

Non-Rail



by Divina Gato-Hogno
LSR Non-Rail Chair
d.gatohogno@gmail.com

The election results for the Board of Directors are below:

(No report received)

President – Donna Orr
Treasurer – Steve Sandifer
Div 1 Director – Dick Brannan
Div 3 Director – Charles Goodrich
Div 5 Director – Brooks Willig
Div 7 Director – Don Kimmell

I would like to thank the candidates for supporting the LSR. Please start thinking about next year's election and how you can play a key role in this organization. And a big thank you for voting!

Photography



by Michael Harang
LSR Photography Chair
bu1977@att.net

As I reported in my Director At Large report, 2022 has been very difficult for myself and my family. As a result, I have not had any opportunity to perform my duties as photography chairman for the LSR. I will be attending and photographing the LSR/NMRA Convention this coming August in Grapevine, Tx. I am in the process of converting from my crop-sensor Nikon camera body to a full-frame Canon mirror-less camera body and lenses to provide better quality photos for this event and beyond.

Publications



by Peter Kazmir
LSR Publications Chair and
Marker Lamp Editor & Publisher
peter@centexnmra.org

We're continuing to work to get the *Marker Lamp* back on its new schedule, but life continues to interfere.

As I mentioned in my last report, I'd like to change the Ad policy to make it more flexible and fair going forward. Specifically, I'd like to do three things: Officially support multiple ad sizes and types, Adjust the rates across those sizes and types to be fair to all, and Implement an official policy regarding free content. You can read my full proposal in the BOD meeting minutes.

Finally, I have been working on updates to the *Marker Lamp* and I am now thinking these may go beyond a simple style refresh. Since the magazine is now only published electronically, there are some things we can do to take advantage of that - to make it easier to read and also easier to publish. Stay tuned for more details on that in future reports.

I will close with my oft-repeated plea for content. The *Marker Lamp* can only be successful if there are articles and photographs to publish. I am happy to work with anyone with any sort of content in any shape or form. Don't think what you have isn't good enough or interesting enough. This hobby is great because there's something for everyone, and the *Marker Lamp* should represent that. Please reach out with your layout photos, clinics, trip reports, or write ups of what you've recently built. If you're interested, someone else will be too.

Publicity



by Riley Triggs
LSR Publicity Chair
rileytriggs@gmail.com

All my attention is on marketing and advertising for the 2023 Texas Express this year. So far over one hundred social media posts have been made, and the frequency of those has increased from three a week to one every day from now until the convention ends. These posts have reached 17,400 people on Facebook and 4400 people on Instagram since October 1, 2022.

Email blasts have gone out via Model Railroader's subscription list that numbers over one hundred thousand people. Approximately four hundred people click on these ads each appearance. There have been 15 email blasts so far for a total of approximately 6000 people who have interacted with our ads.

Print ads have or will appear multiple times in Market Lamp, multiple other regional newsletters, Cowcatcher, O Scale, Narrow Gauge Gazette, Model Railroad News, and Railroad Model Craftsman.

Articles about the convention have appeared in the Marker Lamp, and NMRA Magazine.

I have appeared on three episodes of Modeler's Life mentioning the convention with one of those dedicated to the convention. I have also appeared on the Around the Layout podcast which will air soon.

Direct email will begin this month targeted to previous attendees and NMRA email lists. This will be limited to a one month campaign focusing on early bird promotion and announcing the Scale Trains convention car.

In-person marketing has occurred at the Plano Train Show, Austin Area Train Show, the Amherst Train Show, and the Rocky Mountain Train Show. Approximately 1000 flyers have been distributed at these shows.

Marketing activities will continue up to and through the convention and are scheduled to conclude approximately one week after the show ends.

Treasurer



by Speed Muller
LSR Treasurer
lstrtreasurer@huntatrophy.com

Treasurer Report

Net Worth - as of April 30th, 2023

Assets

Cash and Bank Accounts	
Bank of America Fund	\$ 44,340.98
Outstanding Checks	\$ -40.00
Total Cash and Bank Accounts	\$ 44,300.98
Total Assets	\$ 44,300.98

Liabilities

Restricted Funds for Bob Clark Award	\$ 448.86
Restricted Funds for DeLattre Fund	\$ 578.00
Restricted Funds for Division 7	\$ 172.50
Total Liabilities	\$ 1,199.36

Overall Total Net Worth \$ 43,101.62

Youth



by Chuck Lind, MMR
LSR Youth Chair
chucklind46@gmail.com
979-219-3305

Youth Award Nominations Needed

As Youth Chair I am looking for youth nominees for this year. The deadline for submitting them will be December 31.

Cowcatcher Division 1



by Dick Brannan
director@cowcatcherdivision.org



cowcatcherdivision.com

The Cowcatcher Division is off to a strong start in 2023 as we continue to stress our themes for the year:

- Helping You Make Your Model Railroading Dreams a Reality.
- "If You Do Nothing, Expect Nothing as a Result!"

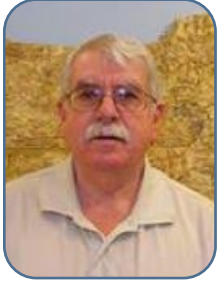
So far this year we have had an excellent clinics on the Port of Galveston and its history, how to make and weather signs found in the towns along your right of way and a "hands on" clinic on programming Arduinos. Joe Fugate also visited our last Cowcatcher meeting via Zoom in April and presented a clinic "Make it Run Like a Dream"

Upcoming clinics include Weathering presented by Craig Brotman and making Deciduous Trees conducted by Mike Ross.

From a membership standpoint we staffed a NMRA table at the "Train-A-Plooza" in Grapevine, TX on March 11th and 12th. We are also planning to staff a membership table at local model railroad shops during May/June as well as the Red River RPM meet on June 24 at the Forest Hills Civic Center in Forest Hills, TX

Planning and preparation continues for 2023 Texas Express, the NMRA Convention and National Train Show at the Gaylord Texan in Grapevine, TX. Registration can be made at www.2023texasexpress.com. Early registration discount ends June 30 th, so please register.

Bayou Division 2



by Rod Fredericks
fredericks.rod@gmail.com



Recently I visited the Crescent City Model Railroad Club in Kenner, LA (New Orleans area). They were hosting a presentation by representatives from Scale Trains. There were some forty attendants at the presentation which was fantastic. They showed how their products were designed, developed, manufactured and brought to the market, followed by a Q & A session. They also talked about shipping problems.

The following weekend we were at the train show in Houston, TX and presented the same program. I was there helping to liquidate the model railroad estate of Jim Loftland, a dear friend who passed last fall, so I was not able to see it again. Those who did attend appeared to have had the same favorable impression as I did.

We continue to explore the possibility of hosting the 2025 LSR Convention in the Baton Rouge/New Orleans area. After visiting several hotels in the Baton Rouge area we have found a few sites that look very promising. All on the south side of town adjacent to I-10 and I-12, which provide access to the New Orleans area only 60 minutes away. More on that to come.

Trinity River Division 3



by Charles Goodrich, MMR
director@cowcatcherdivision.org



trinityriverdivision.org

Division 3 attendance has continued to grow in the post pandemic environment with attendance averaging 42 for the first third of the year. This is about 10 more people per meeting than last year. We are continuing our effort to offer better and higher quality clinics to sustain this continued growth.

Another feature that was added this year beginning in February, we have one local layout open after the meeting for tours. Only those in attendance at the meeting are given the address and contact information for the open house. This feature has been popular with our division.

Division 3 had several outstanding clinics in the first five months of 2023.

The scheduled clinician was under the weather for the January meeting so Charles Goodrich, MMR stepped in to present a clinic on Painting, Decaling and Weathering of a Brass Steam Locomotive. Although the topic focused on brass steam engines the methods apply for painting anything.

The clinic for February was presented by Jerry Hoverson. His clinic is on Modeling Water. Jerry discussed several methods that create an acceptable water feature on our layouts.

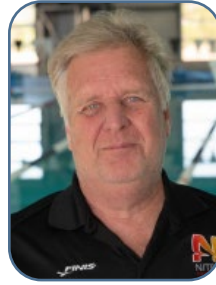
After the meeting, Marc LaChey, MMR opened his Cripple Creek & Tincup Railroad layout for visitors. The CC&TCRR is an example of what you can build in a small room by modeling a narrow-gauge railroad in Sn3. Scenery and track work are 100% complete.

The March clinic was presented by Jeff Palmer. Jeff told how to make Deciduous Trees using Sagebrush and Super Tree material.

After the meeting Bob Lydecker opened his layout for visitors. His layout depicts West coast logging. This layout is 100% complete.

Our April clinic was presented by Dave Ackmann and entitled "Generators". Dave has developed free online tools that make 3-D printing easier and don't require the use of complicated or expensive software. This was a preview of his clinic that will be presented at the NMRA National Convention (Texas Express 2023) in Grapevine, TX this August.

Cen-Tex Division 4



by Bob Thiele
director@centexnmra.org



centexnmra.org

After the meeting Jerry Hoverson opened his layout for viewing. His layout depicts Colorado railroading in both standard and narrow gauge. This layout is 100% complete

The May clinic was presented by Steve Crise and was a slide show on the Nevada Northern. Steve is a professional photographer who has spent many seasons photographing the NN.

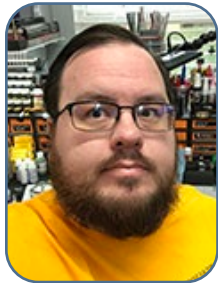
After the meeting Lee Bangma opened his layout for tours. Lees layout features both standard and narrow gauge set in the 1930's. It is 100% complete

The summer is almost upon us and Division Four has been busy as a group building small layouts for public display. The first one was built by five members of the Division/AMRS which will be raffled off at the Austin Train show on May 6 and 7. They built a portable layout that incorporates track work, wiring, scenery, structures and rolling stock. This layout will be a great starting set for someone who is just entering the hobby of modeling railroading. The second project is a yearlong endeavor taken on by the division to design and build a shelf layout and will encompass all the skills enjoyed in the hobby. In the March meeting the members looked over the framework of the layout and discussed the different techniques in constructing the framework. Members were asked to submit designs for the layout, considering all types of themes. So far over ten submissions have been received and more coming in, Once the division decides on a theme and track plan, the construction will begin.

Sam Nicastro will continue his series on putting DCC into small places. Sam is a N scaler, and he has amazed the membership over the last couple of years with his success installing DCC decoders in some really small engines.

The all NMRA Austin Model Railway Society will be hosting the Austin Train show on May 6 & 7. It will be held at the Palmer events center, 900 Barton Springs Rd., Austin TX. Go to the website for all the information, <https://austintrainshow.org>. Along with numerous vendors the show will be conducting clinics on various model railroading subjects, operating layouts in the convention center and switching layout for young adults to operate. On another AMRS note, the group held a BBQ at the Austin Steam Train Association railway yard. The affair was catered, and members dined in the various streamline lounge cars. Afterwards, the members were given a tour of the train and the history behind each car. Later they were able to inspect the ongoing projects at the yard such as the rebuilding of a 1926 wooden caboose and the building of a power car for the train set. Looking forward to the next meeting in May and traveling to the national convention in Grapevine, TX.

West Texas Division 5



by Brooks Willig
Headroadie2004@gmail.com

[Newsletter](#)

The West Texas and Panhandle Division 5 of the Lone Star Region continues to highball down the tracks. We have grown by 10 members since 2022. Zoom clinic involvement has been holding steady with an average of 10 people on at one time. We have had some great clinics presented by Ralph Renzetti, Michelle Kempema, Bernard Hellen of Miniprints.ca, and Micheal Groves of Dwarvin. We have also had Don Winn present his clinic with a different approach to lift-ups. In April and May, the division hosted a two-part clinic series on Free-mo Modular railroading presented by Bob Schrempp, Kevin Leddy, and Jacob Damron.

I have established a Youtube channel for the division to post recordings from past meetings. I have posted all the meetings that have been recorded. <https://www.youtube.com/@NMRALSRD5>

In June we will have our first division-wide in-person meetup. This will be an American Windmill Museum where the Lubbock Model Railroad Association meets every month. I hope this will continue to be an annual or bi-annual event.

South Texas Division 6



by Don Winn
donnswinn@gmail.com



April 8th signaled our change of meeting schedule to the 2nd Saturday of the even-numbered months. Even though it turned out to be Easter weekend, we had a great attendance of 24, including 4 new attendees. Doug Price presented a clinic on the Comanche & Indian Gap railroad. (See Doug's feature article on Live Steaming in the prior Marker Lamp).



Larry Smith gave us a preview of what we could see at his layout open house. Bob Thomas shared a number of Tips



& Tricks, plus we had the usual lineup of Show-N-Tell and Deal or Dud. We also had a visit from one of our sponsors, George Hollwedel from Prototype N Scale Models, who shared with us what he can supply.

Mark your calendars, as our next meetings are scheduled through the year on June 10, August 12, October 14 and December 9. Still at 11:00 AM at the Longhorn Café at 12311 Nacogdoches Rd San Antonio, TX 78217.

To view the meeting presentations, including Doug's videos of the Comanche & Indian Gap railroad, visit our Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/groups/nmralsrdivision6

Following the April meeting, a number of us traveled out to Kerrville to view Larry Smith's incredible Great Hill Country Northern Railroad. Larry and Kay were excellent hosts and made the visit a memorable event. Thanks, Larry and Kay!



In March, we saw the passing of a popular model railroad when Frolin Marek hosted the last open house of his indoor G-scale layout. Frolin and his new bride have sold the house, but Frolin is already making plans for his new layout at their new home.



The local train shows this spring have been well attended, starting with the SAMRA club train show in February. The vendors I talked with all said that business was good. Every child in attendance was given a free rail car, courtesy of the SAMRA club. I had a table set up to talk about the NMRA and to invite folks to our division meetings.

As I write this, the New Braunfels Train Show has wrapped up, and that was very well attended, as usual. I found some nice treasures at the New Braunfels Museum table and the Austin Steam Train table.

Upcoming events:

- August 12 Division 6 meeting at the Longhorn Café
- August 20-27 The NMRA International Convention in Grapevine, Texas



As always, if there is anything I can do to help you in your modeling, please don't hesitate to contact me.
SAFETY FIRST – Be careful out there.

North Louisiana Division 7



by Don Kimmell
elf4kcs@me.com

The previous 5+ months have been quiet for the most part. Membership is holding. We have lost a few Members, all to "other" issues, mainly health related.

Dr. Kamm's Sue Lines has been disassembled and moved to a new location for upkeep, cleaning and working on the signal system. The Sue Lines does have a "new" owner who is planning on building a new structure to house the layout. I am sure there will be more in information in the future.

We have done a couple of Operation Lifesaver Facilitations (presentations, hand-outs) in the previous couple of months. One in Minden-a town festival, and the other in Calhoun with the Boy Scouts-did discuss the benefits of Model Railroading.

A couple of the Kansas City Southern Historical Society's Board members were invited to the "Final Spike" ceremony in Kansas City on April 15. This was when the CP (Canadian Pacific) and KCS merged. The result is CPKC (Canadian Pacific Kansas City Limited). It was a very interesting event. There were a number of politicians –international, federal, state, county, city and a few more. We met the CEO of the "new" railroad, the very gracious and personable Mr. Keith E. Creel, who has a great appreciation of historical significance of the railroads.



Texas Gulf Division 8



by Phil Stewart
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texasgulfdivision.org



The Jefferson, Texas train Days is May 20th & 21st. I will be attending, just to hand out stuff- - NMRA, Operation Lifesaver and KCSHS trinkets. It is usually a small fun show.

Clinics, clinics and more clinics. In our continuing effort to bring the best in clinics to Division 8 members we have had a line up in 2023 of outstanding clinicians. . We strive to bring clinics that will accomplish three things, first we want to help you improve your skills as a modeler, second we want to help you attain achievement awards towards receiving your master model railroad status and third we want you have fun and enjoy the fellowship of other modelers.

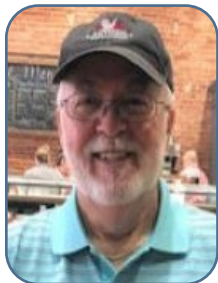
Our Upcoming clinic in July clinic will be on Saturday, July 8 at 10AM at the Tracey Gee Community Center, 3599 Westcenter. Our clinician will be long time Division 8 member Lourdes McCleary. Lourdes is going to continue one of our on going themes of detailing with a make and take clinic on detailing structures and cars. Detailing is an important part of the hobby and coupled with figures(from our June clinic) will really add "life" to a layout. We have tried to encourage our members to not only attend clinics but estate sales, on line clinics, and layout tours as well. These give our members ideas they may not have thought of for their layout.

Our June clinic will teach you all about figures. How to paint them, repurpose them, and reposition appendages. And what better person to do it than the Lone Star Region Director at large and Master Model Railroader Pete Leach. This clinic will also be at the Tracey Gee Community Center on Saturday June 13.

We began the year with an outstanding make and take clinic from Duane Richardson on modeling a 1930's flat car. For those attendees that finished the car you are on your way to completing your Cars Achievement award. In a similar vein Division 8 director Phil Stewart has volunteered some empty space on his layout for members that want to complete their electrical or scenery awards. Phil earned those awards years ago so if you need a place to earn those achievement awards contact Phil.

And finally we have encouraged our members to attend the NMRA national convention in Grapevine this year sponsored by our fellow divisions 1 and 3.

Director At-Large



by Darrell Cowles
darrellcowles1@gmail.com

The Fall train show in Plano was invigorating in that it was nice to see crowds back looking and buying train stuff. I don't remember seeing that many people for many years. I have been to several of the Division 1 meetings and they are attended well; between 40-50 in person plus another 8-10 on Zoom. Dick Brannon has slid right in and transitioned to Director without a hitch, and there have been several clinics recently that were very interesting and helpful.

The Texas Western club hosted the nice folks from Scale Trains. Shane, Michelle and Bear were entertaining and went through the history of how Scale Trains came about, and what is in the future. This was attended by about 50 people.

The Texas Western is gearing up and trying to get as much scenery installed as possible before the Texas Express 2023 convention.

Director At-Large



by Michael Harang
bu1977@att.net

The past year has been very busy for myself, my immediate family, and my extended family. We have completed clearing out and selling my in-law's home. My modeling activity has been on hold for quite a time now. We have finally sold our home in Franklinton, LA (Div. 2) and are returning to the DFW area to be near our sons again, move scheduled for Memorial Day weekend. So, building any of my planned modules is on hold until after relocation occurs. When I am back in Div. 3, I am planning on attending their monthly meetings and visiting other clubs in the NTX area.

Director At-Large



by Pete Leach, MMR
pleachtx55@gmail.com

The start of the year proved very busy for me. I was finishing up my career with plans to retire from the workforce at the end of February. I was kept very busy at work to the very end but did find time to work with Jeff Palmer on the LSR elections. We had a large turnout for the voting this year. *[Results posted previously in this issue. -Ed.]* I'd like to thank the members that stepped up to run for office.

I assembled a clinic on the ice trade in New England and presented it to the Pettycoat Group in March. It covered the history of the methods of harvesting ice and how it evolved as a commercial business. I was so inspired by the information found during my research that I've decided to build a scene in HOn30. So far, I've completed a waterline

model of a two-masted schooner that was used to ship ice from Maine to cities along the east coast. I am currently working on scratchbuilding an icehouse where the ice was stored after delivery by the narrow-gauge railroad. It's all freelanced but based on historical practices.

I will be presenting two clinics at the National Narrow Gauge Convention in Denver this September. One is the clinic I did at last year's LSR Convention on Figures. The second will cover how I developed an operating system on my 2-foot Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington layout.

I am working with Bob Barnett and Chuck Lind on the 2024 LSR Convention to be held next February in Houston. I will serve as the Registrar, something I've never done before. Fortunately, I have Bob, Chuck, and the rest of the team to help guide me!

Finally, I had a chance to work with my Grandson, Peter, when he showed interest in learning something about photography. I let him use my DSLR to compose and shoot the photo below. The scene is on an N Scale layout he and his brother have been building at my house. I showed him how to use the camera to take several shots at various focal points. Then he used my stacking software to complete the shot. It took him several tries, each time he discovered something out of place. Tim Blackwell at the Cowcatcher magazine published the photo in the Mar/Apr issue.



A switch crew on the local is discussing their next move. Photo by 11-year old Peter D Leach, grandson of the author.



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H0 Scale Cars from Cincinnati Division 7

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Pricing is \$25 per car, or a 3-car set at \$70. Shipping (via USPS Priority) is \$9.45 for one car and \$17.10 for two to three cars. Ohio residents, please add 7.8% sales tax on the total price of the kits and the shipping/handling fee. Customers outside the USA, please [contact us](#) for shipping arrangements and charges.

To order, please send your email and phone information along with a check or money order in US dollars, payable to Cincinnati Division 7, MCR, NMRA, to:

Cincinnati Division 7 Car Projects
c/o Paul Maciulewicz
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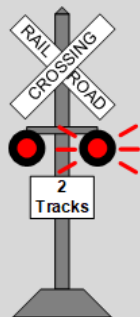
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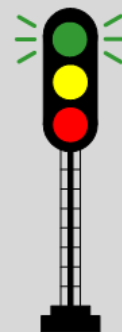
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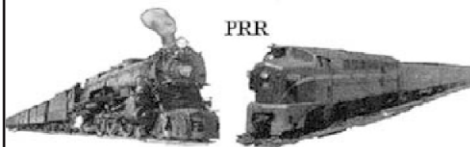


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